

CLEOPATRA: A ROMANCE

Georg Ebers



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CLEOPATRA

A ROMANCE

BY

GEORG EBERS

AUTHOR OF UARDA, AN EGYPTIAN PRINCESS, SERAPIS, JOSHUA,
A THORNY PATH, THE STORY OF MY LIFE, ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY MARY J. SAFFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED
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Dedicated,
IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE,
TO MY FRIEND THE POET
WILHELM JORDAN.

BOSTON HERALD.

"CLEOPATRA."

The Cleopatra of Mr. George Ebers, as revealed in his new romance bearing the name of the most noteworthy of all princesses, does not so greatly differ from the Cleopatra of Shakespeare as to make his apologetic preface necessary to the ordinary American or British reader, nor is it needed by the French student of Rollin or by readers of Plutarch. The time when historical personages were judged by current standards of morals and feeling has so completely passed that the present danger is from the disposition of youthful persons of ill-balanced minds to adopt the obsolete standards for their own use, and Cleopatra and the Roman women who were her contemporaries are fairly estimated nowadays, even by ordinary readers. That the great Elizabethan, lacking all the knowledge conferred by modern discoveries and explorations, Roman and Egyptian, divined the serpent of old Nile so well is but an instance of the difference between the manner in which genius and the rest of the world read Plutarch or any other historian.

The most important divergence made by Mr. Ebers from ordinarily received history is his reason for the flight from Actium. In his account Cleopatra flees less from fright than from vanity. Having long been deprived of various cosmetics and of the services of her trusted medical adviser, she becomes so ill-contented with her looks that she fancies that she is losing Antony's affection, and thinking the victory safe, departs that he may follow at a proper time, and rejoin her with love renewed by absence. He, being entirely subjugated by her magic arts, follows instantly, without waiting to conquer. This is ingenious, and, if the ladies who spell woman with a capital initial will permit the assertion, is also natural, and that Antony should misunderstand and should follow what he supposed to be a terrified retreat, is also natural. Iras and Charmian are the Iras and Charmian of Shakespeare, but described in detail, and it is chiefly through them that Mr. Ebers connects his crowd of imaginary personages with the queen and with the other real persons in the book. The means by which the general atmosphere of the story is produced cannot be too highly praised. There is much less detail than in "An Egyptian Princess," and yet by many delicate touches, the reader is made to feel that he is gazing upon a land in which the will of one woman is omnipotent.

PREFACE.

IF the author should be told that the sentimental love of our day was unknown to the pagan world, he would not cite last the two lovers, Antony and Cleopatra, and the will of the powerful Roman general, in which he expressed the desire, wherever he might die, to be buried beside the woman whom he loved to his latest hour. His wish was fulfilled, and the love-life of these two distinguished mortals, which belongs to history, has more than once afforded to art and poesy a welcome subject.

In regard to Cleopatra, especially, life was surrounded with an atmosphere of romance bordering on the fabulous. Even her bitterest foes admire her beauty and rare gifts of intellect. Her character, on the contrary, presents one of the most difficult problems of psychology. The servility of Roman poets and authors, who were unwilling frankly to acknowledge the light emanating so brilliantly from the foe of the state and the Emperor, solved it to her disadvantage. Everything that bore the name of Egyptian was hateful or suspicious to the Roman, and it was hard to

forgive this woman, born on the banks of the Nile, for having seen Julius Cæsar at her feet and compelled Mark Antony to do her bidding. Other historians, Plutarch at their head, explained the enigma more justly, and in many respects in her favour.

It was a delightful task to the author to scan more closely the personality of the hapless Queen, and from the wealth of existing information shape for himself a creature in whom he could believe. Years elapsed ere he succeeded; but now that he views the completed picture, he thinks that many persons might be disposed to object to the brightness of his colours. Yet it would not be difficult for the writer to justify every shade which he has used. If, during his creative work, he learned to love his heroine, it was because, the more distinctly he conjured before his mind the image of this wonderful woman, the more keenly he felt and the more distinctly he perceived how fully she merited not only sympathy and admiration, but, in spite of all her sins and weaknesses, the self-sacrificing affection which she inspired in so many hearts.

It was an author of no less importance than Horace who called Cleopatra "*non humilis mulier*"—a woman capable of no baseness. But the phrase gains its greatest importance from the fact that it adorns the hymn which the poet dedicated to Octavianus and his victory over Antony and

Cleopatra. It was a bold act, in such an ode, to praise the victor's foe. Yet he did it, and his words, which are equivalent to a deed, are among this greatly misjudged woman's fairest claims to renown.

Unfortunately it proved less potent than the opinion of Dio, who often distorted what Plutarch related, but probably followed most closely the farce or the popular tales which, in Rome, did not venture to show the Egyptian in a favourable light.

The Greek Plutarch, who lived much nearer the period of our heroine than Dio, estimated her more justly than most of the Roman historians. His grandfather had heard many tales of both Cleopatra and Antony from his countryman Philotas, who, during the brilliant days when they revelled in Alexandria, had lived there as a student. Of all the writers who describe the Queen, Plutarch is the most trustworthy, but even his narrative must be used with caution. We have closely followed the clear and comprehensive description given by Plutarch of the last days of our heroine. It bears the impress of truth, and to deviate widely from it would be arbitrary.

Unluckily, Egyptian records contain nothing which could have much weight in estimating the character of Cleopatra, though we have likenesses representing the Queen alone, or with her son Cæsarion. Very recently (in 1892) the fragment of a colossal double statue was found in Alexandria, which can scarcely be intended for

any persons except Cleopatra and Antony hand in hand. The upper part of the female figure is in a state of tolerable preservation, and shows a young and attractive face. The male figure was doubtless sacrificed to Octavianus's command to destroy Antony's statues. We are indebted to Herr Dr. Walther, in Alexandria, for an excellent photograph of this remarkable piece of sculpture. Comparatively few other works of plastic art, in which we here include coins, that could render us familiar with our heroine's appearance, have been preserved.

Though the author must especially desire to render his creation a work of art, it is also requisite to strive for fidelity. As the heroine's portrait must reveal her true character, so the life represented here must correspond in every line with the civilization of the period described. For this purpose we placed Cleopatra in the centre of a larger group of people, whom she influences, and who enable her personality to be displayed in the various relations of life.

Should the author succeed in making the picture of the remarkable woman, who was so differently judged, as "lifelike" and vivid as it stamped itself upon his own imagination, he might remember with pleasure the hours which he devoted to this book.

GEORG EBERS.

TÜTZING ON THE STARNBERGER SEE, *October 5, 1893.*

CLEOPATRA.

CHAPTER I.

GORGAS, the architect, had learned to bear the scorching sunbeams of the Egyptian noonday. Though not yet thirty, he had directed—first as his late father's assistant and afterwards as his successor—the construction of the huge buildings erected by Cleopatra in Alexandria.

Now he was overwhelmed with commissions; yet he had come hither ere the hours of work were over, merely to oblige a youth who had barely passed the confines of boyhood.

True, the person for whom he made this sacrifice was Cæsarion, the son whom Cleopatra had given to Julius Cæsar. Antony had honoured him with the proud title of "King of kings"; yet he was permitted neither to rule nor even to issue orders, for his mother kept him aloof from affairs of state, and he himself had no desire to hold the sceptre.

Gorgias had granted his wish the more readily,

because it was apparent that he wanted to speak to him in private, though he had not the least idea what Cæsarion desired to confide, and, under any circumstances, he could give him only a brief interview. The fleet, at whose head the Queen had set sail, with Mark Antony, for Greece, must have already met Octavianus's galleys, and doubtless a battle wherein the destiny of the world was decided had also been fought upon the land. Gorgias believed that the victory would fall to Antony and the Queen, and wished the noble pair success with his whole heart. He was even obliged to act as if the battle had been already determined in their favour, for the architectural preparations for the reception of the conquerors were entrusted to his charge, and that very day must witness the decision of the location of the colossal statues which represented Antony hand in hand with his royal love.

The epitrop Mardion, a eunuch, who as Regent, represented Cleopatra; and Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, who rarely opposed him, wished to have the piece of sculpture erected in a different place from the one he favoured. The principal objection to the choice made by the powerful head of the government was that it had fallen on land owned by a private individual. This might lead to difficulties, and Gorgias opposed it. As an artist, too, he did not approve Mardion's plan; for though, on Didymus's land, the statues would have faced the sea,

which the Regent and the Keeper of the Seal regarded as very important, no fitting background could have been obtained.

At any rate, the architect could now avail himself of Cæsarion's invitation to overlook from the appointed place of meeting—the lofty steps of the Temple of Isis—the Bruchium, and seek the best site for the twin statues. He was anxious to select the most suitable one; the master who had created this work of art had been his friend, and had closed his eyes in death shortly after its completion.

The sanctuary whence Gorgias commenced his survey was in one of the fairest portions of the Bruchium, the Alexandrian quarter, where stood the royal palace with its extensive annexes, the finest temples—except the Serapeum, situated in another part of the city—and the largest theatres; the Forum invited the council of Macedonian citizens to its assemblies, and the Museum afforded a resort for the scholars.

The little square closed in the east by the Temple of Isis was called the "Corner of the Muses," on account of the two marble statues of women before the entrance of the house, which, with its large garden facing the square northward and extending along the sea, belonged to Didymus, an old and highly respected scholar and member of the Museum.

The day had been hot, and the shade of the Temple of Isis was very welcome to the architect.

This sanctuary rested upon a lofty foundation, and a long flight of steps led to the cella. The spot afforded Gorgias a wide prospect.

Most of the buildings within his vision belonged to the time of Alexander and his successors in the house of the Ptolemies, but some, and by no means the least stately, were the work of Gorgias himself or of his father. The artist's heart swelled with enthusiastic delight at the sight of this portion of his native city.

He had been in Rome, and visited many other places numbered among the world's fairest and most populous cities ; but not one contained so many superb works of art crowded together in so small a space.

"If one of the immortals themselves," he murmured, "should strive to erect for the inhabitants of Olympus a quarter meet for their grandeur and beauty, it could scarcely be much more superb or better fitted to satisfy the artistic needs which we possess as their gift, and it would surely be placed on the shore of such a sea."

While speaking, he shaded his keen eyes with his hand. The architect, who usually devoted his whole attention to the single object that claimed his notice, now permitted himself the pleasure of enjoying the entire picture in whose finishing touches he had himself borne a part ; and, as his practised eye perceived in every temple and colonnade the studied and finished harmony of form,

and the admirable grouping of the various buildings and statues, he said to himself, with a sigh of satisfaction, that his own art was the noblest and building the highest of royal pleasures. No doubt this belief was shared by the princes who, three centuries before, had endeavoured to obtain an environment for their palaces which should correspond with their vast power and overflowing wealth, and at the same time give tangible expression to their reverence for the gods and their delight in art and beauty. No royal race in the universe could boast of a more magnificent abode. These thoughts passed through Gorgias's mind as the deep azure hue of sea and sky blended with the sunlight to bring into the strongest relief all that the skill and brains of man, aided by exhaustless resources, had here created.

Waiting, usually a hard task for the busy architect, became a pleasure in this spot; for the rays streaming lavishly in all directions from the diadem of the sovereign sun flooded with dazzling radiance the thousands of white marble statues on the temples and colonnades, and were reflected from the surfaces of the polished granite of the obelisks and the equally smooth walls of the white, yellow, and green marble, the syenite, and the brown, speckled porphyry of sanctuaries and palaces. They seemed to be striving to melt the bright mosaic pictures which covered every foot of the ground, where no highway intersected and

no tree shaded it, and flashed back again from the glimmering metal or the smooth glaze in the gay tiles on the roofs of the temples and houses. Here they glittered on the metal ornaments, yonder they seemed to be trying to rival the brilliancy of the gilded domes, to lend to the superb green of the tarnished bronze surfaces the sparkling lustre of the emerald, or to transform the blue and red lines of the white marble temples into lapis-lazuli and coral and their gilded decorations into topaz. The pictures in the mosaic pavement of the squares, and on the inner walls of the colonnades, were doubly effective against the light masses of marble surrounding them, which in their turn were indebted to the pictures for affording the eye an attractive variety instead of dazzling monotony.

Here the light of the westering sun enhanced the brilliancy of colour in the flags and streamers which fluttered beside the obelisks and Egyptian pylons, over the triumphal arches and the gates of the temples and palaces. Yet even the exquisite purplish blue of the banner waving above the palace on the peninsula of Lochias, now occupied by Cleopatra's children, was surpassed by the hue of the sea, whose deep azure near the shore merged far away into bands of lighter and darker blue, blending with dull or whitish green.

Gorgias was accustomed to grasp fully whatever he permitted to influence him, and though still loyal to his custom of associating with his art

every remarkable work of the gods or man, he had not forgotten in his enjoyment of the familiar scene the purpose of his presence in this spot.

No, the garden of Didymus was *not* the proper place for his friend's last work.

While gazing at the lofty plane, sycamore, and mimosa trees which surrounded the old scholar's home, the quiet square below him suddenly became astir with noisy life, for all classes of the populace were gathering in front of the sequestered house, as if some unusual spectacle attracted them.

What could they want of the secluded philosopher?

Gorgias gazed earnestly at them, but soon turned away again; a gay voice from below called his name.

A singular procession had approached the temple—a small body of armed men, led by a short, stout fellow, whose big head, covered with bushy curls, was crowned with a laurel wreath. He was talking eagerly to a younger man, but had paused with the others in front of the sanctuary to greet the architect. The latter shouted a few pleasant words in reply. The laurel-crowned figure made a movement as if he intended to join him, but his companion checked him, and, after a short parley, the older man gave the younger one his hand, flung his heavy head back, and strutted onward like a peacock, followed by his whole train.

The other looked after him, shrugging his shoulders; then called to Gorgias, asking what boon he desired from the goddess.

"Your presence," replied the architect blithely.

"Then Isis will show herself gracious to you," was the answer, and the next instant the two young men cordially grasped each other's hands.

Both were equally tall and well formed; their features bore witness to their Greek origin; nay, they might have been taken for brothers, had not the architect's whole appearance seemed sturdier and plainer than that of his companion, whom he called "Dion" and friend. As the latter heaped merry sarcasms upon the figure wearing the laurel wreath who had just left him, Anaxenor, the famous zither-player, on whom Antony had bestowed the revenues of four cities and permission to keep a body-guard, and Gorgias's deeper voice sometimes assented, sometimes opposed with sensible objections, the difference between these two men of the same age and race became clearly apparent.

Both showed a degree of self-reliance unusual at their age; but the architect's was the assurance which a man gains by toil and his own merit, Dion's that which is bestowed by large possessions and a high position in society. Those who were ignorant that the weight of Dion's carefully prepared speech had more than once turned the scale in the city councils would probably have been disposed to take him for one of the careless world-

lings who had no lack of representatives among the gilded youth of Alexandria ; while the architect's whole exterior, from his keen eye to the stouter leather of his sandals, revealed earnest purpose and unassuming ability.

Their friendship had commenced when Gorgias built a new palace for Dion. During long business association people become well acquainted, even though their conversations relate solely to direction and execution. But in this case, he who gave the orders had been only the inspirer and adviser, the architect the warm-hearted friend, eager to do his utmost to realize what hovered before the other's mind as the highest attainable excellence. So the two young men became first dear, and finally almost indispensable to each other. As the architect discovered in the wealthy man of the world many qualities whose existence he had not suspected, the latter was agreeably surprised to find in the artist, associated with his solidity of character, a jovial companion, who—this first made him really beloved by his friend—had no lack of weaknesses.

When the palace was completed to Dion's satisfaction and became one of the most lauded ornaments of the city, the young men's friendship assumed a new form, and it would have been difficult to say which received the most benefit.

Dion had just been stopped by the zither-player to ask for confirmation of the tidings that the unit-

ed forces of Antony and Cleopatra had gained a great victory on sea and land.

In the eating-house at Kanopus, where he had breakfasted, every one was full of the joyful news, and rivers of wine had been drunk to the health of the victors and the destruction of the malicious foe.

"In these days," cried Dion, "not only weak-brained fellows, like the zither-player, believe me omniscient, but many sensible men also. And why? Because, forsooth, I am the nephew of Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, who is on the brink of despair because he himself knows nothing, not even the veriest trifle."

"Yet he stands nearest to the Regent," observed Gorgias, "and must learn, if any one does, how the fleet fares."

"You too!" sighed his friend. "Had I been standing so far above the ground as you, the architect—by the dog, I should not have failed to note the quarter whence the wind blew! It has been southerly a whole fortnight, and keeps back the galleys coming from the north. The Regent knows nothing, absolutely nothing, and my uncle, of course, no more. But if they do learn anything they will be shrewd enough not to enrich me with it."

"True, there are other rumours afloat," said the architect thoughtfully. "If I were in Mardion's place——"

"Thank the Olympians that you are not,"

laughed his companion. "He has as many cares as a fish has scales. And one, the greatest.—That pert young Antyllus was over-ready with his tongue yesterday at Barine's. Poor fellow! He'll have to answer for it to his tutor at home."

"You mean the remark about the Queen's accompanying the fleet?"

"St!" said Dion, putting his finger on his lips, for many men and women were now ascending the temple steps. Several carried flowers and cakes, and the features of most expressed joyful emotion. The news of the victory had reached their ears, and they wanted to offer sacrifices to the goddess whom Cleopatra, "the new Isis," preferred to all others.

The first court-yard of the sanctuary was astir with life. They could hear the ringing of the sistrum bells and the murmuring chant of the priests. The quiet fore-court of the little temple of the goddess, which here, in the Greek quarter of palaces, had as few visitors as the great Temple of Isis in the Rhakotis was overcrowded, had now become the worst possible rendezvous for men who stood so near the rulers of the government. The remark made about the Queen the evening before by Antyllus, Antony's nineteen-year-old son, at the house of Barine, a beautiful young woman who attracted all the prominent men in Alexandria, was the more imprudent because it coincided with the opinion of all the wisest heads. The reckless

youth enthusiastically revered his father, but Cleopatra, the object of Antony's love, and—in the Egyptians' eyes—his wife, was not Antyllus's mother. He was the son of Fulvia, his father's first wife, and feeling himself a Roman, would have preferred a thousand times to live on the banks of the Tiber. Besides, it was certain—Antony's stanchest friends made no attempt to conceal the fact—that the Queen's presence with the army exerted a disturbing influence, and could not fail to curb the daring courage of the brave general. Antyllus, with the reckless frankness inherited from his father, had expressed this view in the presence of all Barine's guests, and in a form which would be only too quickly spread throughout Alexandria, whose inhabitants relished such speeches.

These remarks would be slow in reaching the plain people who were attracted to the temple by the news of the victory, yet many doubtless knew Cæsarion, whom the architect was awaiting here. It would be wiser to meet the prince at the foot of the steps. Both men, therefore, went down to the square, though the crowds seeking the temple and thronging the space before Didymus's house made it more and more difficult to pace to and fro.

They were anxious to learn whether the rumour that Didymus's garden was to be taken for the twin statues had already spread abroad, and their first questions revealed that this was the case. It

was even stated that the old sage's house was to be torn down, and within a few hours. This was vehemently contradicted; but a tall, scrawny man seemed to have undertaken to defend the ruler's violence.

The friends knew him well. It was the Syrian Philostratus, a clever extempore speaker and agitator of the people, who placed his clever tongue at the disposal of the highest bidder.

"The rascal is probably now in my uncle's employ," said Dion. "The idea of putting the piece of sculpture there originated with him, and it is difficult to turn him from such plans. There is some secret object to be gained here. That is why they have brought Philostratus. I wonder if the conspiracy is connected in any way with Barine, whose husband—unfortunately for her—he was before he cast her off."

"Cast her off!" exclaimed Gorgias wrathfully. "How that sounds! True, he did it, but to persuade him the poor woman sacrificed half the fortune her father had earned by his brush. You know as well as I that life with that scoundrel would be unbearable."

"Very true," replied Dion quietly. "But as all Alexandria melted into admiration after her singing of the *yalemos* at the Adonis festival, she no longer needed her contemptible consort."

"How can you take pleasure, whenever it is possible, in casting such slurs upon a woman,

whom but yesterday you called blameless, charming, peerless?"

"That the light she sheds may not dazzle your eyes. I know how sensitive they are."

"Then spare, instead of irritating them. Besides, your suggestion gives food for thought. Barine is the granddaughter of the man whose garden they want, and the advocate would probably be glad to injure both. But I'll spoil his game. It is *my* business to choose the site for the statues."

"Yours?" replied Dion. "Unless some one who is more powerful opposes you. I would try to win my uncle, but there are others superior to him. The Queen has gone, it is true; but Iras, whose commands do not die away in empty air, told me this morning that she had her own ideas about the erection of the statue."

"Then you bring Philostratus here!" cried the architect.

"I?" asked the other in amazement.

"Ay, you," asserted Gorgias. "Did not you say that Iras, with whom you played when a boy, was now becoming troublesome by watching your every step? And then—you visit Barine constantly, and she so evidently prefers you, that the fact might easily reach the ears of Iras."

"As Argus has a hundred, jealousy has a thousand eyes," interrupted Dion, "yet I seek nothing from Barine, save two pleasant hours when the day

is drawing towards its close. No matter; Iras, I suppose, heard that I was favoured by this much-admired woman. Iras herself has some little regard for me, so she bought Philostratus. She is willing to pay something for the sake of injuring the woman who stands between us, or the old man who has the good or evil fortune of being her rival's grandfather. No, no; that would be too base! And believe me, if Iras desired to ruin Barine, she need not make so long a circuit. Besides, she is not really a wicked woman. Or is she? All I know is that where any advantage is to be gained for the Queen, she does not shrink even from doubtful means, and also that the hours speed swiftly for any one in her society. Yes, Iras, Iras—I like to utter the name. Yet I do not love her, and she—loves only herself, and—a thing few can say—another still more. What is the world, what am I to her, compared with the Queen, the idol of her heart? Since Cleopatra's departure, Iras seems like the forsaken Ariadne, or a young roe which has strayed from its mother. But stop; she may have a hand in the game: the Queen trusted her as if she were her sister, her daughter. No one knows what she and Charmian are to her. They are called waiting-women, but are their sovereign's dearest friends. When, on the departure of the fleet, Cleopatra was compelled to leave Iras here—she was ill with a fever—she gave her the charge of her children, even those whose beards were be-

ginning to grow, the 'King of kings' Cæsarion, whose tutor punishes him for every act of disobedience; and the unruly lad Antyllus, who has forced his way the last few evenings into our friend's house."

"Antony, his own father, introduced him to her."

"Very true, and Antyllus took Cæsarion there. This vexed Iras, like everything which may disturb the Queen. Barine is troublesome on account of Cleopatra, whom she wishes to spare every annoyance, and perhaps she dislikes her a little for my sake. Now she wants to inflict on the old man, Barine's grandfather, whom she loves, some injury which the spoiled, imprudent woman will scarcely accept quietly, and which will rouse her to commit some folly that can be used against her. Iras will hardly seek her life, but she may have in mind exile or something of that kind. She knows people as well as I know her, my neighbour and playmate, whom many a time I was obliged to lift down from some tree into which the child had climbed as nimbly as a kitten."

"I myself suggested this conjecture, yet I cannot credit her with such unworthy intrigues," cried Gorgias.

"Credit her?" repeated Dion, shrugging his shoulders. "I only transport myself in imagination to the court and to the soul of the woman who helps make rain and sunshine there. You have

columns rounded and beams hewed that they may afterwards support the roof to which in due time you wish to direct attention. She and all who have a voice in the management of court affairs look first at the roof and then seek anything to raise and support it, though it should be corpses, ruined lives, and broken hearts. The point is that the roof shall stand until the architect, the Queen, sees and approves it. As to the rest—— But there is the carriage—— It doubtless brings—— You were——”

He paused, laid his hand on his friend's arm, and whispered hastily: “Iras is undoubtedly at the bottom of this, and it is not Antyllus, but yonder dreaming lad, for whom she is moving. When she spoke of the statues just now, she asked in the same breath where I had seen him on the evening of the day before yesterday, and that was the very time he called on Barine. The plot was made by her, and Iras is doing all the work. The mouse is not caught while the trap is closed, and she is just raising her little hand to open it.”

“If only she does not use some man's hand,” replied the architect wrathfully, and then turned towards the carriage and the elderly man who had just left it, and was now approaching the two friends.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Cæsarion's companion reached Dion and Gorgias, the former modestly made a movement to retire. But Archibius was acquainted with both, and begged him to remain. There was an air of precision and clearness in the voice and quiet movements of this big, broad-shouldered man, with his robust frame and well-developed limbs. Though only a few years beyond forty, not merely his grey hair but the calm, impressive dignity of his whole manner indicated a more advanced age.

“The young King yonder,” he began in a deep, musical voice, motioning towards the equipage, “wished to speak to you here in person, Gorgias, but by my advice he refrained from mingling with the crowd. I have brought him hither in a closed carriage. If the plan suits you, enter it and talk with him while I keep watch here. Strange things seem to be occurring, and yonder—or am I mistaken? Has the monster dragged along there any connection with the twin statues of the Queen and her friend? Was it you who selected that place for them?”

"No," replied the architect. "The order was issued over my head and against my will."

"I thought so," replied the other. "This is the very matter of which Cæsarion wishes to speak. If you can prevent the erection of the statues on Didymus's land, so much the better. I will do everything in my power to aid you, but in the Queen's absence that is little."

"Then what can be said of *my* influence?" asked the architect. "Who, in these days, knows whether the sky will be blue or grey to-morrow? I can guarantee one thing only: I will do my best to prevent this injury of an estimable citizen, interference with the laws of our city, and violation of good taste."

"Say so to the young King, but express yourself cautiously," replied Archibius as the architect turned towards the carriage.

As soon as Dion and the older man were alone, the latter inquired the cause of the increasing uproar, and as, like every well-disposed Alexandrian, he esteemed Archibius, and knew that he was intimately acquainted with the owner of the imperilled garden, and therefore with his granddaughter Barine, he confided his anxiety to him without reserve.

"Iras is your niece, it is true," he said in his open-hearted manner, "but I know that you understand her character. It suits her now to fling a golden apple into the path of a person whom she

dislikes and believes incautious, that she may pick it up and thus afford her an opportunity to bring a charge of theft."

Noting the inquiring glance Archibius fixed upon him as he made this comparison, he changed his tone and continued more earnestly: "Zeus is great, but destiny is superior even to him. Zeus can accomplish much, but when Iras and your sister Charmian, who unfortunately is now with the Queen, wish to effect anything, he, like the Regent Mardion, must give way. The more lovable Cleopatra is, the more surely every one prizes a position near her person above aught else, especially such trifles as law and justice."

"These are harsh words," responded Archibius, "and seem the more bitter in proportion to the germ of truth which they contain. Our court shares the fate of every other in the East, and those to whom Rome formerly set the example of holding law and justice sacred——"

"Can now go there," interrupted Dion, "to learn how rudely both are trampled under foot. The sovereigns here and there may smile at one another like the augurs. They are like brothers——"

"But with the difference," Archibius broke in, "that the head of our public affairs is the very embodiment of affability and grace; while in Rome, on the contrary, harsh severity and bloody arrogance, or even repulsive servility, guide the reins."

Here Archibius interrupted himself to point to the shouting throng advancing towards them. "You are right," Dion answered. "Let us defer this discussion till we can pursue it in the house of the charming Barine. But I rarely meet you there, though by blood you are so nearly allied to her father. I am her friend—at my age that might easily mean her lover. But in our case the comparison would not suit. Yet perhaps you will believe me, for you have the right to call yourself the friend of the most bewitching of women."

A sorrowful smile flitted over the grave, set features of the older man, who, raising his hand as if in protest, answered carelessly: "I grew up with Cleopatra, but a private citizen loves a queen only as a divinity. I believe in your friendship for Barine, though I deem it dangerous."

"If you mean that it might injure the lovely woman," replied Dion, raising his head more proudly as if to intimate that he required no warning, even from him, "perhaps you are right. Only I beg you not to misunderstand me. I am not vain enough to suppose that I could win her heart, but unfortunately there are many who cannot forgive the power of attraction which she exerts over me as well as upon all. So many men gladly visit Barine's house that there are an equal number of women who would rejoice to close it. Among them, of course, is Iras. She dislikes my friend; nay, I fear that what you witness yonder is the

apple she flung in order, if not to ruin, at least to drive her from the city, ere the Queen—may the gods grant her victory!—ere Cleopatra returns. You know your niece Iras. Like your sister Charmian, she will shrink from nothing to remove an annoyance from her mistress's pathway, and it will hardly please Cleopatra when she learns that the two youths whose welfare lies nearest her heart—Antyllus and Cæsarion—seek Barine's house, no matter how stainless the latter's reputation may be."

"I have just heard of it," replied Archibius, "and I, too, am anxious. Antony's son has inherited much of his father's insatiable love of pleasure. But Cæsarion! He has not yet ventured out of the dreamland which surrounds him into actual life. What others scarcely perceive deals him a serious blow. I fear Eros is sharpening arrows for him which will pierce deep into his heart. While talking with me he seemed strangely changed. His dreamy eyes glittered like a drunkard's when he spoke of Barine. I fear, I fear——"

"Impossible!" cried Dion, in surprise, nay, almost terror. "If that is the case, Iras is not wholly wrong, and we must deal with the matter differently. But it is of the first importance to conceal the fact that Cæsarion has any interest in the affairs of the old house-owner. To seek to maintain the old man's right to his own property is a matter of course, and I will undertake to do

this and try to get yonder orator home—— Just see how the braggart is swinging his arms in Iras's service! As for Barine, it will be well to induce her to leave of her own free will a city where it will be made unpleasant for her. Try to persuade her to pursue this course. If I went to her with such a suggestion, I, who yesterday—— No, no! Besides, she might hear that Iras and I—— She would imagine all sorts of absurdities. You know what jealousy means. To you, whom she esteems, she would surely listen, and she need not go far from the city. If the heart of this enthusiastic boy—who might some day desire to be 'King of kings' not only in name—should really be fired with love for Barine, what serious misfortune might follow! We must secure her from him. She could not go to my country house among the papyrus plantations at Sebennys. It would afford too much license for evil tongues. But you—your villa at Kanopus is too near—but, if I am not mistaken, you have——”

“My estate in the lake region is remote enough, and will be at her disposal,” interrupted the other. “The house is always kept ready for my reception. I will do my best to persuade her, for your advice is prudent. She must be withdrawn from the boy's eyes.”

“I shall learn the result of your mission tomorrow,” cried Dion eagerly—“nay, this evening. If she consents, I will tell Iras, as if by accident,

that Barine has gone to Upper Egypt to drink new milk, or something of that kind. Iras is a shrewd woman, and will be glad if she can keep aloof from such trifles during the time which will decide the fate of Cleopatra and of the world."

"My thoughts, too, are always with the army," said Archibius. "How trivial everything else seems compared with the result which will be determined in the next few days! But life is made up of trifles. They are food, drink, maintenance. Should the Queen return triumphant, and find Cæsarion in wrong paths——"

"We must close them against him," exclaimed Dion.

"That the boy may not follow Barine?" asked Archibius, shaking his head. "I think we need feel no anxiety on that score. He will doubtless eagerly desire to do so, but with him there is a wide gulf between the wish and its fulfilment. Antyllus is differently constituted. He would be quite capable of ordering a horse to be saddled, or the sails of a boat to be spread in order to pursue her—beyond the Cataract if necessary. So we must maintain the utmost secrecy concerning the place to which Barine voluntarily exiles herself."

"But she is not yet on her way," replied Dion with a faint sigh. "She is bound to this city by many ties."

"I know it," answered Archibius, confirming his companion's fear. The latter, pointing to the

equipage, said in a rapid, earnest tone : " Gorgias is beckoning. But, before we part, let me beseech you to do everything to persuade Barine to leave here. She is in serious danger. Conceal nothing from her, and say that her friends will not leave her too long in solitude."

Archibius, with a significant glance, shook his finger at the young man in playful menace, and then went up to the carriage.

Cæsarion's clear-cut but pallid face, whose every feature resembled that of his father, the great Cæsar, bent towards them from the opening above the door, as he greeted both with a formal bend of the head and a patronizing glance. His eyes had sparkled with boyish glee when he first caught sight of the friend from whom he had been separated several weeks, but to the stranger he wished to assume the bearing which beseemed a king. He desired to make him feel his superior position, for he was ill-disposed towards him. He had seen him favoured by the woman whom he imagined he loved, and whose possession he had been promised by the secret science of the Egyptians, whose power to unveil the mysteries of the future he firmly believed. Antyllus, Antony's son, had taken him to Barine, and she had received him with the consideration due his rank. Spite of her bright graciousness, boyish timidity had hitherto prevented any word of love to the young beauty whom he saw surrounded by so many distinguished

men of mature years. Yet his beaming, expressive eyes must have revealed his feelings to her. Doubtless his glances had not been unobserved, for only a few hours before an Egyptian woman had stopped him at the temple of his father, Cæsar, to which, according to the fixed rules governing the routine of his life, he went daily at a certain hour to pray, to offer sacrifices, to anoint the stone of the altar, or to crown the statue of the departed emperor.

Cæsarion had instantly recognized her as the female slave whom he had seen in Barine's atrium, and ordered his train to fall back.

Fortunately his tutor, Rhodon, had not fulfilled his duty of accompanying him. So the youth had ventured to follow the slave woman, and in the shadow of the mimosas, in the little grove beside the temple, he found Barine's litter. His heart throbbed violently as, full of anxious expectation, he obeyed her signal to draw nearer. Still, she had granted him nothing save the favour of gratifying one of her wishes. But his heart had swelled almost to bursting when, resting her beautiful white arm on the door of her litter, she had told him that unjust men were striving to rob her grandfather Didymus of his garden, and she expected him, who bore the title of the "King of kings" to do his best to prevent such a crime.

It had been difficult for him to grasp her meaning while she was speaking. There was a roaring

sound in his ears as if, instead of being in the silent temple grove, he was standing on a stormy day upon the surf-beaten promontory of Lochias. He had not ventured to raise his eyes and look into her face. Not until she closed with the question whether she might hope for his assistance did her gaze constrain him to glance up. Ah, what had he not fancied he read in her imploring blue eyes! how unspeakably beautiful she had appeared!

He had stood before her as if bereft of his senses. His sole knowledge was that he had promised, with his hand on his heart, to do everything in his power to prevent what threatened to cause her pain. Then her little hand, with its sparkling rings, was again stretched towards him, and he had resolved to kiss it; but while he glanced around at his train, she had already waved him a farewell, and the litter was borne away.

He stood motionless, like the figure of a man on one of his mother's ancient vases, staring in bewilderment after the flying figure of Happiness, whom he might easily have caught by her floating locks. How he raged over the miserable indecision which had defrauded him of so much joy! Yet nothing was really lost. If he succeeded in fulfilling her wishes, she could not fail to be grateful; and then——

He pondered over the person to whom he should apply—Mardion, the Regent, or the Keeper of the Seal? No, they had planned the erection of the

group of sculpture in the philosopher's garden. To Iras, his mother's confidante? Nay, last of all to her. The cunning woman would have perceived his purpose and betrayed it to the Regent. Ah, if Charmian, his mother's other attendant, had been present! but she was with the fleet, which perhaps was even now engaged in battle with the enemy.

At this recollection his eyes again sought the ground—he had not been permitted to take the place in the army to which his birth entitled him, while his mother and Charmian—— But he did not pursue this painful current of thought; for a serious reproach had forced itself upon him and sent the blood to his cheeks. He wished to be considered a man, and yet, in these fateful days, which would determine the destiny of his mother, his native city, Egypt, and that Rome which he, the only son of Cæsar, was taught to consider his heritage, he was visiting a beautiful woman, thinking of her, and of her alone. His days and half the nights were passed in forming plans for securing her love, forgetful of what should have occupied his whole heart.

Only yesterday Iras had sharply admonished him that, in times like these, it was the duty of every friend of Cleopatra, and every foe of her foes, to be with the army at least in mind.

He had remembered this, but, instead of heeding the warning, the thought of her had merely

recalled her uncle, Archibius, who possessed great influence, not merely on account of his wealth but because every one also knew his high standing in the regard of the Queen. Besides, the clever, kindly man had always been friendly to him from childhood, and like a revelation came the idea of applying to him, and to the architect Gorgias, who had a voice in the matter, and by whom he had been strongly attracted during the period while he was rebuilding the wing assigned to the prince in the palace at Lochias.

So one of the attendants was instantly despatched with the little tablet which invited Gorgias to the interview at the Temple of Isis.

Then, in the afternoon, Cæsarion went secretly in a boat to the little palace of Archibius, situated on the seashore at Kanopus, and now as the latter, with his friend, stood beside the carriage door, he explained to them that he was going with the architect to old Didymus to assure him of his assistance.

This was unadvisable in every respect, but it required all the weight of the older man's reasons to induce the prince to yield. The consequences which might ensue, should the populace discover that he was taking sides against the Regent, would be incalculable. But submission and withdrawal were especially difficult to the young "King of kings." He longed to pose as a man in Dion's presence, and as this could not be, he strove to maintain the semblance of independence by yield-

ing his resolve only on the plea of not desiring to injure the aged scholar and his granddaughter. Finally, he again entreated the architect to secure Didymus in the possession of his property. When at last he drove away with Archibius, twilight was already gathering, torches were lighted in front of the temple and the little mausoleum adjoining the cella, and pitch-pans were blazing in the square.

CHAPTER III.

"THE lad is in an evil plight," said Gorgias, shaking his head thoughtfully as the equipage rolled over the stone pavement of the Street of the King.

"And over yonder, added Dion," "the prospect is equally unpleasing. Philostratus is setting the people crazy. But the hired mischief-maker will soon wish he had been less ready to seize Iras's gold coins."

"And to think," cried the architect, "that Barine was this scoundrel's wife! How could it be——"

"She was but a child when they married her," interrupted Dion. "Who consults a girl of fifteen in the choice of a husband? And Philostratus—he was my classmate at Rhodus—at that time had the fairest prospects. His brother Alexas, Antony's favourite, could easily advance him. Barine's father was dead, her mother was accustomed to follow Didymus's counsel, and the clever fellow had managed to strew dust in the old man's eyes. Long and lank as he is, he is not bad-looking even now.

When he appeared as an orator he pleased his hearers. This turned his head, and a spendthrift's blood runs in his veins. To bring his fair young bride to a stately mansion, he undertook the bad cause of the thievish tax-collector Pyrrhus, and cleared him.

"He bought a dozen false witnesses."

"There were sixteen. Afterwards they became as numerous as the open mouths you see shouting yonder. It is time to silence them. Go to the old man's house and soothe him—Barine also, if she is there. If you find messengers from the Regent, raise objections to the unprecedented decree. You know the portions of the law which can be turned to Didymus's advantage."

"Since the reign of Euergetes II, registered landed property has been unassailable, and his was recorded."

"So much the better. Tell the officials also, confidentially, that you know of objections just discovered which may perhaps change the Regent's views."

"And, above all, I shall insist upon my right to choose the place for the twin statues. The Queen herself directed the others to heed my opinion."

"That will cast the heaviest weight into the scale. We shall meet later. You will prefer to keep away from Barine to-night. If you see her, tell her that Archibius said he would visit her later

—for an object I will explain afterwards. I shall probably go to Iras to bring her to reason. It will be better not to mention Cæsarion's wish."

"Certainly—and you will give nothing to yonder brawler."

"On the contrary. I feel very generous. If Peitho will aid me, the insatiate fellow will get more than may be agreeable to him."

Then grasping the architect's hand, Dion forced his way through the throng surrounding the high platform on wheels, upon which the closely covered piece of sculpture had been rolled up. The gate of the scholar's house stood open, for an officer in the Regent's service had really entered a short time before, but the Scythian guards sent by the exegetus Demetrius, one of Barine's friends, were keeping back the throng of curious spectators.

Their commander knew Gorgias, and he was soon standing in the impluvium of the scholar's house, an oblong, roofless space, with a fountain in the centre, whose spray moistened the circular bed of flowers around it. The old slave had just lighted some three-branched lamps which burned on tall stands. The officers sent by the Regent to inform Didymus that his garden would be converted into a public square had just arrived.

When Gorgias entered, these magistrates, their clerks, and the witnesses accompanying them—a group of twenty men, at whose head was Apollonius, a distinguished officer of the royal treasury

—were in the house. The slave who admitted the architect informed him of it.

In the atrium a young girl, doubtless a member of the household, stopped him. He was not mistaken in supposing that she was Helena, Didymus's younger granddaughter, of whom Barine had spoken. True, she resembled her sister neither in face nor figure, for while the young matron's hair was fair and waving, the young girl's thick black tresses were wound around her head in a smooth braid. Very unlike Barine's voice, too, were the deep, earnest tones trembling with emotion, in which she confronted him with the brief question, concealing a faint reproach, "Another demand?"

After first ascertaining that he was really speaking to Helena, his friend's sister, he hastily told her his name, adding that, on the contrary, he had come to protect her grandfather from a serious misfortune.

When his glance first rested upon her in the dimly lighted room, the impression she made upon him was by no means favourable. The pure brow, which seemed to him too high for a woman's face, wore an indignant frown; and though her mouth was beautiful in form, its outlines were often marred by a passionate tremor that lent the exquisitely chiselled features a harsh, nay, bitter expression. But she had scarcely heard the motive of his presence ere, pressing her hand upon her bosom with a sigh of relief, she eagerly exclaimed:

"Oh, do what you can to avert this terrible deed! No one knows how the old man loves this house. And my grandmother! They will die if it is taken from them."

Her large eyes rested upon him with a warm, imploring light; and the stern, almost repellent voice thrilled with love for her relatives. He must lend his aid here, and how gladly he would do so! He assured her of this; and Helena, who had heard him mentioned as a man of ability, saw in him a helper in need, and begged him, with touching fervour, to show her grandfather, when he came before the officers, that all was not lost.

The astonished architect asked if Didymus did not know what was impending, and Helena hastily replied:

"He is working in the summer-house by the sea. Apollonius is a kind-hearted man, and will wait until I have prepared my grandfather. I must go to him. He has already sent Philotas—his pupil, who finds and unrolls his books—a dozen times to inquire the cause of the tumult outside; but I replied that the crowds were flocking to the harbour on account of the Queen. There is often a mob shouting madly; but nothing disturbs my grandfather when he is absorbed in his work; and his pupil—a young student from Amphissa—loves him and does what I bid him. My grandmother, too, knows nothing yet. She is deaf, and the female slaves dare not tell her. After her recent

attack of giddiness, the doctor said that any sudden shock might injure her. If only I can find the right words, that my grandfather may not be too sorely hurt!"

"Shall I accompany you?" asked Gorgias kindly.

"No," she answered hurriedly. "He needs time ere he will trust strangers. Only, if Apollonius discloses the terrible truth, and his grief threatens to overpower him, comfort him, and show him that we still have friends who are ready to protect us from such disaster."

She waved her hand in token of gratitude, and hurried through the little side gate into the garden.

Gorgias looked after her with sparkling eyes, and drew a long breath. How good this girl must be, how wisely she cared for her relatives! How energetically the young creature behaved! He had seen his new acquaintance only in the dim light, but she must be beautiful. Her eyes, lips, and hair certainly were. How his heart throbbed as he asked himself the question whether this young girl, who was endowed with every gift which constituted the true worth of womanhood, was not preferable to her more attractive sister Barine!—when the thought darted through his mind that he had cause to be grateful to the beard which covered his chin and cheeks, for he felt that he, a sedate, mature man, must have blushed. And he knew why. Only half an hour before he had felt

and admitted to Dion that he considered Barine the most desirable of women, and now another's image cast a deep shadow over hers and filled his heart with new, perhaps stronger emotions.

He had had similar experiences only too often, and his friends, Dion at their head, had perceived his weakness and spoiled many an hour for him by their biting jests. The series of tall and short, fair and dark beauties who had fired his fancy was indeed of considerable length, and every one on whom he had bestowed his quickly kindled affections had seemed to him the one woman he must make his own, if he would be a happy man. But ere he had reached the point of offering his hand, the question had arisen in his mind whether he might not love another still more ardently. So he had begun to persuade himself that his heart yearned for no individual, but the whole sex—at least the portion which was young and could feel love—and therefore he would scarcely be wise to bind himself to any one. True, he knew that he was capable of fidelity, for he clung to his friends with changeless loyalty, and was ready to make any sacrifice in their behalf. With women, however, he dealt differently. Was Helena's image, which now floated before him so bewitchingly, destined to fade as swiftly? The contrary would have been remarkable. Yet he firmly believed that this time Eros meant honestly by him. The laughing loves who twined their rose garlands

around him and Helena's predecessors had nothing to do with this grave maiden.

These reflections darted through his brain with the speed of lightning, and still stirred his heart when he was ushered into the impluvium, where the magistrates were impatiently awaiting the owner of the house. With the lucidity peculiar to him, he explained his reasons for hoping that their errand would be vain, and Apollonius replied that no one would rejoice more than he himself if the Regent should authorize him, on the morrow, to countermand his mission. He would gladly wait there longer to afford the old man's granddaughter an opportunity to soften the tidings of the impending misfortune.

The kind-hearted man's patience, however, was not tested too long; for when Helena entered the summer-house Didymus had already been informed of the disaster which threatened him and his family. The philosopher Euphranor, an elderly member of the Museum, had reached him through the garden gate, and, spite of Philotas's warning sign, told him what was occurring. But Didymus knew the old philosopher, who, a recluse from the world like himself, was devoting the remainder of his life and strength to the pursuit of science. So he only shook his head incredulously, pushed back the thin locks of grey hair which hung down on his cheeks over the barest part of his skull, and exclaimed reproachfully, though as if the matter under dis-

cussion was of the most trivial importance : "What have you been hearing ? We'll see about it !"

He had risen as he spoke, and too abruptly surprised by the news to remember the sandals on the mat and the upper robe which lay on a chest of drawers at the end of the room, he was in the act of quitting it, when his friend, who had silently watched his movements, stopped him, and Helena entered.

The grey-haired sage turned to her, and, vexed by his friend's doubts, begged her to convince her grandfather that even matters which do not please us may nevertheless be of some importance. She did so as considerately as possible, thinking meanwhile of the architect and his hopes.

Didymus, with his eyes bent on the ground, shook his grey head again and again. Then, suddenly raising it, he rushed to the door, and without heeding the upper garment which Helena still held in her hand, tore it open, shouting, "But things must and shall be changed !"

Euphranor and his granddaughter followed. Though his head was bowed, he crossed the little garden with a swift, firm tread, and, without noticing the questions and warnings of his companions, walked at once to the impluvium. The bright light dazzled his weakened eyes, and his habit of gazing into vacancy or on the ground compelled him to glance from side to side for some time, ere he could accustom himself to it. Apollonius ap-

proached, greeted him respectfully, and assured him that he deeply regretted having interrupted him in the work for which the whole world was waiting, but he had come on important business.

"I know, I know," the old scholar answered with a smile of superiority. "What is all this ado about?"

As he spoke he looked around the group of spectators, among whom he knew no one except Apollonius, who had charge of the museum accounts, and the architect, for whom he had composed the inscription on the Odeum, which he had recently built. But when his eyes met only unfamiliar faces, the confidence which hitherto had sustained him began to waver, though still convinced that a demand such as the philosopher suggested could not possibly be made upon him, he continued: "It is stated that there is a plan for turning my garden into a public square. And for what purpose? To erect a piece of sculpture. But there can be nothing serious in the rumour, for my property is recorded in the land register, and the law——"

"Pardon me," Apollonius broke in, "if I interrupt you. We know the ordinance to which you refer, but this case is an exceptional one. The Regent desires to take nothing from you. On the contrary, he offers, in the name of the Queen, any compensation you yourself may fix for the piece of land which is to be honoured by the statues of

the highest personages in the country—Cleopatra and Antony, hand in hand. The piece of sculpture has already been brought here. A work by the admirable artist Lysander, who passed too early to the nether world, certainly will not disfigure your house. The little summer-house by the sea must be removed to-morrow, it is true; you know that our gracious Queen may return any day—victorious if the immortals are just. This piece of sculpture, which is created in her honour, to afford her pleasure, must greet her on her arrival, so the Regent sent me to-day to communicate his wish, which, as he represents the Queen——”

“Yet,” interrupted the architect, who had again warmly assured the old man’s granddaughter of his aid—“yet your friends will endeavour to persuade the Regent to find another place for the statues.”

“They are at liberty to do so,” said the officer. “What will happen later the future will show. My office merely requires me to induce the worthy owner of this house and garden to submit to-day to the Queen’s command, which the Regent and my own heart bid me clothe in the form of a request.”

During this conversation the old man had at first listened silently to the magistrate’s words, gazing intently into his face. So it was true. The demand to yield up his garden, and even the little house, for fifty years the scene of his study and creative work, for the sake of a statue, would

be made. Since this had become a certainty, he had stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground. Grief had paralyzed his tongue, and Helena, who felt this, for the aged head seemed as if it were bending under a heavy burden, had drawn close to his side.

The shouts and howls of the throng outside echoed through the open roof of the impluvium, but the old man did not seem to hear them, and did not even notice his granddaughter. Yet, no sooner did he feel her touch than he hurriedly shrank away, flung back his drooping head, and gazed around the circle of intruders.

The dull, questioning eyes of the old commentator and writer of many books now blazed with the hot fire of youthful passion and, like a wrestler who seeks the right grip, he measured Apollonius and his companions with wrathful glances. The fragile recluse seemed transformed into a warrior ready for battle. His lips and the nostrils of his delicate nose quivered, and when Apollonius began to say that it would be wise to remove the contents of the summer-house that day, as it would be torn down early the next morning, Didymus raised his arms, exclaiming :

“That will not be done. Not a single roll shall be removed ! They will find me at work as usual early to-morrow morning, and if it is still your wish to rob me of my property you must use violence to attain your purpose.”

"Calm yourself," replied Apollonius. "Every one beneath the moon must submit to a higher power; the gods bow to destiny, we mortals to the sovereign. You are a sage; I, merely mindful of the behests of duty, administer my office. But I know life, and if I may offer my counsel, you will accept what cannot be averted, and I will wager ten to one that you will have the best of it; that the Queen will place in your hands means——"

"Sufficient to build a palace on the site of the little house of which I was robbed," Didymus interrupted bitterly. Then rage burst forth afresh: "What do I care for your money? I want my rights, my good, guaranteed rights. I insist upon them, and whoever assails the ground which my grandfather and father bequeathed to me——"

He hesitated, for the throng outside had burst into a loud shout of joy; and when it died away, and the old man began once more defiantly to claim his rights, he was interrupted by a woman's clear tones, addressing him with the Greek greeting, "Rejoice!"—a voice so gay and musical that it seemed to dispel the depression which rested like a grey fog on the whole company.

While Didymus was listening to the excited populace, and the new-comer was gazing at the old man whose rigid obstinacy could scarcely be conquered by kindness, the younger men were looking at the beautiful woman who joined them. Her haste had flushed her cheeks, and from beneath

the turquoise-blue kerchief that covered her fair locks a bewitching face smiled at her sister, the architect, and her grandfather.

Apollonius and many of his companions felt as if happiness in person had entered this imperilled house, and many an eye brightened when the infuriated old man exclaimed in an altered tone, "You here, Barine?" and she, without heeding the presence of the others, kissed his cheek with tender affection.

Helena, Gorgias, and the old philosopher Euphranor, had approached her, and when the latter asked with loving reproach, "Why, Barine, how did you get through the howling mob?" she answered gaily: "That a learned member of the Museum may receive me with the query whether I am here, though from childhood a kind or—what do you think, grandfather?—a malign fate has preserved me from being overlooked, and some one else reprovingly asks how I passed through the shouting mob, as if it were a crime to wade into the water to hold out a helping hand to those we love best when it is up to their chins! But, oh! dear, this howling is too hideous!"

While speaking, she pressed her little hands on the part of the kerchief which concealed her ears, and said no more until the noise subsided, although she declared that she was in a hurry, and had only come to learn how matters were. Meanwhile it seemed as if she was so full of quick, pulsing life,

that it was impossible to leave even a moment unused, if it were merely to bestow or answer a friendly glance.

The architect and her sister were obliged to return hurried answers to hasty questions; and as soon as she ascertained what had brought the strangers there she thanked Apollonius, and said that old friends would do their best to spare her grandfather such a sorrow.

In reply to repeated inquiries from the two old men in regard to her arrival there, she answered: "Nobody will believe it, because in this hurry I could not keep my mouth shut; but I acted like a mute fish and reached the water." Then, drawing her grandfather aside, she whispered to him that, when she left her boat at the harbour, Archibius had seen her from his carriage, and instantly stopped it to inform her of his intended visit that evening. He was coming to discuss an important matter. Therefore she must receive the worthy man, whom she sincerely liked, so she could not stay. Then turning to the others—still with her kerchief on her head ready for departure—she asked what the people meant by their outcries. The architect replied that Philostratus had endeavoured to make the crowd believe that the only appropriate site for the statues of which she had heard was her grandfather's garden, and he thought he knew in whose behalf the fellow was acting.

"Certainly not in the Regent's," said Apol-

lonius, in a tone of sincere conviction; but Barine, over whose sunny brow a shadow had flitted when Gorgias uttered the orator's name, assented with a slight bend of the head, and then whispered hurriedly, yet earnestly, that she would answer for the old man's allowing himself to be persuaded, if he had only time to collect his thoughts.

The next morning, when the market was crowded, the officer might commence his negotiations afresh, if the Regent insisted on his plan. Meanwhile she would do her best to persuade her grandfather to yield, though he was not exactly one of the class who are easily guided. Apollonius might remind the Regent that it would be advisable at this time to avoid a public scandal, to remember Didymus's age, and the validity of his claim.

While Apollonius was talking with his companions, Barine beckoned to the architect, and hastily took leave of the others, protesting that she was in no danger, since she would slip away again like a fish, only this time she would use her tongue, and hoped by its means to win to the support of Didymus's just cause a man who would already have ended all the trouble had the Queen only been in Alexandria.

Until now the eyes and ears of the whole company had been fixed upon Barine. No one had desired anything better than to gaze at and listen to her.

Not until she had quitted the room with Gorgias

did the officials discuss the matter together, and soon after Apollonius went away with his companions, to hold another conference with the Regent about this unpleasant business. This time the architect had followed the young beauty with very mingled feelings. Only an hour before he would have rejoiced to be permitted to accompany and protect Barine; now he would have gladly remained with her sister, who had returned his farewell greeting so gratefully and yet with such maidenly modesty. But even the most vacillating man cannot change one fancy for another as he would replace a black piece on the draught-board with a white one, and he still found it delightful to be so near Barine. Only the thought that Helena might believe that he stood on very intimate terms with her sister had darted with a disquieting influence through his brain when the latter invited him to accompany her.

In the garden Barine begged him, before they went to the landing-place where the boat was moored, to help her ascend the narrow flight of steps leading to the flat roof of the gatekeeper's little house.

Here they could watch unseen the tumult in the square below, for it was surrounded by dense laurel bushes. Bright flames were blazing in the pitch-pans before the two temples at the side of the Corner of the Muses, and their light was increased by the torches held in the hands of Scythi-

ans. Yet no individuals could be distinguished in the throng. The marble walls of the temples shimmered, the statues at Didymus's gate, and the hermæ along the street of the King which passed the threatened house and connected the north of the Corner of the Muses with the sea-shore, loomed from the darkness in the brilliancy of the reflected light, but the smoke of the torches darkened the sky and dimmed the starlight.

The only persons distinctly visible were Dion, who had stationed himself on the lofty framework of the platform on which the muffled statues had been drawn hither, and the attorney Philostratus, who stood on the pedestal of one of the dolphins which surrounded the fountain between the Temple of Isis and the street. The space, a dozen paces wide, which divided them, permitted the antagonists to understand each other, and the attention of the whole throng was fixed upon the wranglers.

These verbal battles were one of the greatest pleasures of the Alexandrians, and they greeted every clever turn of speech with shouts of applause, every word which displeased them with groans, hisses, and cat-calls.

Barine could see and hear what was passing below. She had pushed aside the foliage of the laurel bushes which concealed her, and, with her hand raised to her ear, stood listening to the two disputants. When the scoundrel whom she had called husband, and for whom her contempt had

become too deep for hate, sneeringly assailed her family as having been fed from generation to generation from the corn-bin of the Museum, she bit her lips. But they soon curled, as if what she heard aroused her disgust, for the speaker now turned to Dion and accused him of preventing the kindly disposed Regent from increasing the renown of the great Queen and affording her noble heart a pleasure.

“My tongue,” he cried, “is the tool which supports me. Why am I using it here till it is weary and almost paralyzed? In honour of Cleopatra, our illustrious Queen, and her generous friend, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude. Let all who love her and the divine Antony, the new Herakles and Dionysus—both will soon make their entry among us crowned with the laurels of victory—join the Regent and every well-disposed person in seizing yonder bit of land so meanly withheld by base avarice and a sentiment—a sentiment, do you hear?—which I do not name more plainly, simply because wickedness is repulsive to me, and I do not stand here as an accuser. Whoever upholds the word-monger who spouts forth books as the dolphin at my side does water, may do so. I shall not envy him. But first look at Didymus’s ally and panegyrist. There he stands opposite to me. It would have been better for him had the dolphin at his feet taught him silence. Then he might have remained in the obscurity which befits him.

But whether willing or not, I must drag him forth, and I will show you Dion, fellow-citizens, though I would far rather have you see things which arouse less ire. The dim light prevents your distinguishing the colour of his robe, but I know it, for I saw it in the glare of day. It is hyacinthine purple. You know what that costs. It would support the wives and children of many among you for ten long years. 'How heavy must be the purse which can expose such a treasure to sun and rain!' is the thought of every one who sees him strutting about as proudly as a peacock. And his purse *is* loaded with many talents. Only it is a pity that, day after day, most of you must give your children a little less bread and deprive yourselves of many a draught of wine to deck him out so bravely. His father, Eumenes, was a tax-collector, and what the leech extorted from you and your children, the son now uses to drive, clad in hyacinthine purple, a four-horse chariot, which splashes the mire from the street into your faces as it rolls onward. By the dog! the gentleman does not weigh so very much, yet he needs four horses to drag him. And, fellow-citizens, do you know why? I'll tell you. He's afraid of sticking fast everywhere, even in his speech."

Here Philostratus lowered his voice, for the phrase "sticking fast" had drawn a laugh from some of his hearers; but Dion, whose father had really amassed, in the high position of a receiver

of taxes, the handsome fortune which his son possessed, did not delay his reply.

"Yes, yes," he retorted scornfully, "yonder Syrian babbler hit the mark this time. He stands before me, and who does not easily stick fast when marsh and mire are so near? As for the hyacinthine purple cloak, I wear it because I like it. His crocus-yellow one is less to my taste, though he certainly looks fine enough in it in the sunlight. It shines like a buttercup in the grass. You know the plant. When it fades—and I ask whether you think Philostratus looks like a bud—when it fades, it leaves a hollow spiral ball which a child's breath could blow away. Suppose in future we should call the round buttercup seed-vessels 'Philostratus heads'? You like the suggestion? I am glad, fellow-citizens, and I thank you. It proves your good taste. Then we will stick to the comparison. Every head contains a tongue, and Philostratus says that his is the tool which supports him."

"Hear the money-bag, the despiser of the people!" interrupted Philostratus furiously. "The honest toil by which a citizen earns a livelihood is a disgrace in his eyes."

"*Honest* toil, my good friend," replied Dion, "is scarcely in question here. I spoke only of *your* tongue.—You understand me, fellow-citizens. Or, if any of you are not yet acquainted with this worthy man, I will show him to you, for I know him well. He is my foe, yet I can sincerely recom-

mend him to many of you. If any one has a very bad, shamefully corrupt cause to bring before the courts, I most earnestly counsel him to apply to the buttercup man perched on yonder fountain. He will thank me for it. Believe me, Didymus's cause is just, precisely because this advocate so eagerly assails it. I told you just now the matter under discussion. Which of you who owns a garden can say in future, 'It is mine,' if, during the absence of the Queen, it is allowable to take it away to be used for any other purpose? But this is what threatens Didymus. If this is to be the custom here, let every one beware of sowing a radish or planting a bush or a tree, for should the wife of some great noble desire to dry her linen there, he may be deprived of it ere the former can ripen or the latter give shade."

Loud applause followed this sentence, but Philostratus shouted in a voice that echoed far and wide: "Hear me, fellow-citizens; do not allow yourselves to be deceived! No one is to be robbed here. The project is to purchase, at a high price, the spot which the city needs for her adornment, and to honour and please the Queen. Are the Regent and the citizens to lose this opportunity of expressing the gratitude of years, and the rejoicing over the greatest of victories, of which we shall soon hear, because an evil-disposed person—the word must be uttered—a foe to his country, opposes it?"

"Now the mire is coming too near me," Dion angrily responded, "and I might really stick fast, as I was warned; for I do not envy the ready presence of mind of any person whose tongue would not falter when the basest slander scattered its venom over him. You all know, fellow-citizens, through how many generations the Didymus family has lived to the honour of this city, doing praiseworthy work in yonder house. You know that the good old man who dwells there was one of the teachers of the royal children."

"And yet," cried Philostratus, "only the day before yesterday he walked arm in arm in the Paneum garden with Arius, the tutor of Octavianus, our own and our Queen's most hated foe. In my presence, and before I know not how many others, Didymus distinguished this Arius as his most beloved pupil."

"To give you that title," retorted Dion, "would certainly fill any teacher with shame and anger, no matter how far you had surpassed him in wisdom and knowledge. Nay, had you been committed to the care of the herring dealers, instead of the rhetoricians, every honest man among them would disown you, for they sell only good wares for good money, while you give the poorest in exchange for glittering gold. This time you trample under foot the fair name of an honourable man. But I will not suffer it; and you hear, fellow-citizens, I now challenge this Syrian to prove that Didymus ever

betrayed his native land, or I will brand him in your presence a base slanderer, an infamous, venal destroyer of character!"

"An insult from such lips is easily borne," replied Philostratus in a tone of scornful superiority; but there was a pause ere he again turned to the listening throng, and with all the warmth he could throw into his voice continued: "What do I desire, then, fellow-citizens? What is the sole object of my words? I stand here with clean hands, impelled solely by the impulse of my heart, to plead for the Queen. In order to secure the only suitable site for the statues to be erected to Cleopatra's honour and fame, I enter into judgment with her foes, expose myself to the insult with which boastful insolence is permitted to vent its wrath upon me. But I am not dismayed, though, in pursuing this course, I am acting against the law of Nature; for the infamous man against whom I raise my voice was my teacher, too, and ere he turned from the path of right and virtue—under influences which I will not mention here—he numbered me also, in the presence of many witnesses, among his best pupils. I was certainly one of the most grateful—I chose his granddaughter—the truth must be spoken—for my wife. The possession——"

"Possession!" interrupted Dion in a loud, excited tone. "The corpse cast ashore by the waves might as well boast possession of the sea!"

The dim torchlight was sufficient to reveal Philostratus's pallor to the bystanders. For a moment the orator seemed to lose his self-control, but he quickly recovered himself, and shouted: "Fellow-citizens, dear friends! I was about to make you witnesses of the misery which a woman, whose wickedness is even greater than her beauty, brought upon an inexperienced——"

But he went no further; for his hearers—many of whom knew the brilliant, generous Dion, and Barine, the fair singer at the last Adonis festival—gave the orator tokens of their indignation, which were all the more pitiless because of the pleasure they felt in seeing an expert vanquished by an untrained foe. The wordy war would not have ended so quickly, however, had not restlessness and alarm taken possession of the crowd. The shout, "Back! disperse!" ran through the multitude, and directly after the trampling of hoofs and the commands of the leader of a troop of Libyan cavalry were heard. The matter at stake was not sufficiently important to induce the populace to offer an armed force resistance which might have entailed serious danger. Besides, the blustering war of tongues had reached a merry close, and loud laughter blended with the shouts of fear and warning; for the surging throng had swept with unexpected speed towards the fountain and plunged Philostratus into the basin. Whether this was due to the wrath of some enemy, or to mere accident, could not be learned; the vain

efforts of the luckless man to crawl out of the water up the smooth marble were so comical, and his gestures, after helping hands had dragged him dripping upon the pavement of the square, were so irresistibly funny, that more laughing than angry voices were heard, especially when some one cried, "His hands were soiled by blackening Didymus, so the washing will do him good." "Some wise physicians flung him into the water," retorted another; "he needed the cold application after the blows Dion dealt him."

The Regent, who had sent the troop of horsemen to drive the crowd away from Didymus's house, might well be pleased that the violent measure encountered so little resistance.

The throng quickly scattered, and was speedily attracted by something new at the Theatre of Dionysus—the zither-player Anaxenor had just announced from its steps that Cleopatra and Antony had won the most brilliant victory, and had sung to the accompaniment of his lute a hymn which had deeply stirred all hearts. He had composed it long before, and seized the first opportunity—the report had reached his ears while breakfasting in Kanopus—to try its effect.

As soon as the square began to empty, Barine left her post of observation. It was long since her heart had throbbed so violently. Not one of the many suitors for her favour had been so dear to her as Dion; but she now felt that she loved him.

What he had just done for her and her grandfather was worthy of the deepest gratitude; it proved that he did not come to her house, like most of her guests, merely to while away the evening hours.

It had been no small matter for the young aristocrat, in the presence of the whole multitude, to enter into a debate with the infamous Philostratus, and how well he had succeeded in silencing the dreaded orator! Besides, Dion had even taken her part against his own powerful uncle, and perhaps by his deed drawn upon himself the hostility of his enemy's brother, Alexas, Antony's powerful favourite. Barine might assure herself that he, who was the peer of any Macedonian noble in the city, would have done this for no one else.

She felt as if the act had ransomed her.

When, after an unhappy marriage and many desolate days, she had regained her former bright cheerfulness and saw her house become the centre of the intellectual life of the city, she had striven until now to extend the same welcome to all her guests. She had perceived that she ought not to give any one the power over her which is possessed by the man who knows that he is beloved, and even to Dion she had granted little more than to the others. But now she saw plainly that she would resign the pleasure of being a universally admired woman, whose modest home attracted the most distinguished men in the city, for the far greater hap-

piness which would be hers as Dion's beloved wife. With him, cherished by his love, she believed that she could find far greater joy in solitude than in the gay course of her present life.

She knew now what she must do if Dion sought her, and the architect, for the first time, found her a silent companion. He had willingly accompanied her back to her grandfather's house, where he had again met her sister Helena, while she had quitted it disappointed, because her brave defender had not returned there.

After the interruption of the debate Dion had been in a very cheerful mood. The pleasant sensation of having championed a good cause, and the delightful consciousness of success were not new to him, but he had rarely felt so uplifted as now. He most ardently longed for his next meeting with Barine, and imagined how he would describe what had happened and claim her gratitude for his friendly service. The scene had risen clearly before his mind, but scarcely had the radiant vision of the future faded when the unusually bright expression of his manly face was clouded by a grave and troubled one.

The darkness of the night, illumined only by the flare of the pitch-pans, had surrounded him, yet it had seemed as if he were standing with Barine in the full light of noon in the blossoming garden of his own palace, and, after asking a reward for his sturdy championship, she had clung

to him with deep emotion, and he had passionately kissed her tearful face.

The face had quickly vanished, yet it had been as distinct as the most vivid picture in a dream.

Was Barine more to him than he supposed?

- Had he not been drawn to her, during the past few months, by the mere charm of her pliant intellect and her bright beauty? Had a new, strong passion awakened within him? Was he in danger of seeing the will which urged him to preserve his freedom conquered? Had he cause to fear that some day, constrained by a mysterious, invincible power, in defiance of the opposition of calm reason, he might perhaps bind himself for life to this Barine, the woman who had once been the wife of a Philostratus, and who bestowed her smiles on all who found admittance to her house seeking a feast for the eye, a banquet for the ear, a pleasant entertainment?

Though her honor was as stainless as the breast of a swan—and he had no reason to doubt it—she would still be classed with Aspasia and other women whose guests sought more than songs and agreeable conversations. The gifts with which the gods had so lavishly endowed her had already been shared with too many to permit him, the last scion of a noble Macedonian house, to think of leading her, as mistress, to the palace whose erection he had so carefully and successfully planned with Gorgias.

Surely it lacked nothing save the gracious rule of a mistress.

But if she should consent to become his without the blessing of Hymen? No.

He could not thus dishonor the granddaughter of Didymus, the man who had been his father's revered teacher, a woman whom he had always rejoiced that, spite of the gay freedom with which she received so many admirers, he could still esteem. He would not do so, though his friends would have greeted such scruples with a smile of superiority. Who revered the sacredness of marriage in a city whose queen was openly living for the second time with the husband of another? Dion himself had formed many a brief connection, but for that very reason he could not place a woman like Barine on the same footing with those whose love he had perhaps owed solely to his wealth. He had never lacked courage and resolution, but he felt that this time he would have to resist a power with which he had never coped.

That accursed face! Again and again it rose before his mental vision, smiling and beckoning so sweetly that the day must come when the yearning to realize the dream would conquer all opposition. If he remained near her he would inevitably do what he might afterwards regret, and therefore he would fain have offered a sacrifice to Peitho to induce her to enhance Archibius's powers of persuasion and induce Barine to leave

Alexandria. It would be hard for him to part from her, yet much would be gained if she went into the country. Between the present and the distant period of a second meeting lay respite from peril, and perhaps the possibility of victory. Dion did not recognize himself. He seemed as unstable as a swaying reed, because he had conquered his wish to re-enter old Didymus's house and encourage him, and passed on to his own home. But he would probably have found Barine still with her grandfather, and he would not meet her, though every fibre of his being longed for her face, her voice, and a word of gratitude from her beloved lips. Instead of joy, he was filled with the sense of dissatisfaction which overpowers a man standing at a crossing in the roads, who sees before him three goals, yet can be fully content with neither.

The Street of the King, along which he suffered himself to be carried by the excited throng, ran between the sea and the Theatre of Dionysus. The thought darted through his mind that his friend the architect desired to erect the luckless statues of the royal lovers in front of this stately building. He would divert his thoughts by examining the site which Gorgias had chosen.

The zither-player finished his hymn just as Dion approached the theatre, and the crowd began to disperse. Every one was full of the joyful tidings of victory, and one shouted to another what

Anaxenor, the favourite of the great Antony, who must surely know, had just recited in thrilling verse. Many a joyous Io and loud Evoë to Cleopatra, the new Isis, and Antony, the new Dionysus, resounded through the air, while bearded and smooth, delicate Greek and thick Egyptian lips joined in the shout, "To the Sebasteum!" This was the royal palace, which faced the government building containing the Regent's residence. The populace desired to have the delightful news confirmed, and to express, by a public demonstration, the grateful joy which filled every heart.

Dion, too, was eager to obtain certainty, and, though usually averse to mingling with the populace during such noisy outbursts of feeling, he was preparing to follow the crowd thronging towards the Sebasteum, when the shouts of runners clearing a passage for a closed litter fell upon his ear.

It was occupied by Iras, the Queen's trusted attendant. If any one could give accurate information, it was she; yet it would hardly be possible to gain an opportunity of conversing with her in this throng. But Iras must have had a different opinion; she had seen Dion, and now called him to her side. There were hoarse tones in her voice, usually so clear and musical, which betrayed the emotion raging in her breast as she assailed the young Macedonian noble with a flood of questions. Without giving him the usual greeting, she hastily desired to know what was exciting the peo-

ple, who had brought the tidings of victory, and whither the multitude was flocking?

- Dion had found it difficult not to be forced from the litter while answering. Iris perceived this, and as they were just passing the Mæander, the labyrinth, which was closed after sunset, she ordered her bearers to carry the litter to the entrance, made herself known to the watchman, ordered the outer court to be opened, the litter to be placed there, and the bearers and runners to wait outside for her summons, which would soon be given.

This unusual haste and excitement filled Dion with just solicitude. She refused his invitation to alight and walk up and down, declaring that life offered so many labyrinths that one need not seek them. He, too, seemed to be following paths which were scarcely straight ones. "Why," she concluded, thrusting her head far out of the opening in the litter, "are you rendering it so difficult for the Regent and your own uncle to execute their plans, making common cause with the populace, like a paid agitator?"

"Like Philostratus, you mean, on whom I bestowed a few blows in addition to the golden guerdon received from your hand?"

"Ay, like him, for aught I care. Probably it was you, too, who had him flung into the water, after you had vented your wrath on him? You managed your cause well. What we do for love's sake

is usually successful. No matter, if only his brother Alexas does not rouse Antony against you. For my part, I merely desire to know why and for whom all this was done."

"For whom save the good old man who was my father's preceptor, and his just claim?" replied Dion frankly. "Moreover—for no site more unsuitable could be found than his garden—in behalf of good taste."

Iras laughed a shrill, short laugh, and her narrow, regularly formed face, which might have been called beautiful, had not the bridge of the straight delicate nose been too long and the chin too small, darkened slightly, as she exclaimed, "That is frank at least."

"You ought to be accustomed to that from me," replied Dion calmly. "In this case, however, the expert, Gorgias, fully shares my opinion. I heard that too. You are both the most constant visitors of—what is the woman's name?—the bewitching Barine."

"Barine?" repeated Dion, as if the mention of the name surprised him. "You take care, my friend, that our conversation does honour to its scene, the labyrinth. I speak of works of the sculptor's art, and you pretend that I am referring to what is most certainly a very successful living work from the creative hands of the gods. I was very far from thinking of the granddaughter of the old scholar for whom I interceded."

"Ay," she scornfully retorted, "young gentlemen in your position, and with your habits of life, always think of their fathers estimable teachers rather than of the women who, ever since Pandora opened her box, have brought all sorts of misfortunes into the world. But," she added, pushing back her dark locks from her high forehead, "I don't understand myself, how, with the mountain of care that now burdens my soul, I can waste even a single word upon such trifles. I care as little for the aged scholar as I do for his legion of commentaries and books, though they are not wholly unfamiliar to me. For any concern of mine he might have as many grandchildren as there are evil tongues in Alexandria, were it not that just at this time it is of the utmost importance to remove everything which might cast a shadow on the Queen's pathway. I have just come from the palace of the royal children at Lochias, and what I learned there. But that—I will not, I cannot believe it. It fairly stifles me!"

"Have you received bad news from the fleet?" questioned Dion, with sincere anxiety; but she only bent her head in assent, laying her fan of ostrich-plumes on her lips to enjoin silence, at the same time shivering so violently that he perceived it, even in the dusk. It was evident that speech was difficult, as she added in a muffled tone: "It must be kept secret—Rhodian sailors—thank the gods, it is still very doubtful—it cannot, must not be

true—and yet—the prattle of that zither-player, which has filled the multitude with joyous anticipation, is abominable—the great ones of the earth are often most sorely injured by those who owe them the most gratitude. I know you can be silent, Dion. You could as a boy, if anything was to be hidden from our parents. Would you still be ready to plunge into the water for me, as in those days? Scarcely. Yet you may be trusted, and, even in this labyrinth, I will do so. My heart is heavy. But not one word to any person. I need no confidant and could maintain silence even towards you, but I am anxious that you should understand me, you who have just taken such a stand. Before I entered my litter at Lochias, the boy returned, and I talked with him.”

“Young Cæsarion loves Barine,” replied Dion with grave earnestness.

“Then this horrible folly is known?” asked Iras excitedly. “A passion far deeper than I should ever have expected this dreamer to feel has taken possession of him. And if the Queen should now return—perhaps less successful than we desire—if she looks to those from whom she still expects pleasure, satisfaction, lofty deeds, and learns what has befallen the boy—for what does not that sun-bright intellect learn and perceive? He is dear to her, dearer than any of you imagine. How it will increase her anxiety, perhaps her suffering! With what good reason she will be angered against

those whom duty and love should have commanded to guard the boy ! ”

“ And therefore,” added Dion, “ the stone of offence must be removed. Your first step to secure this object was the attack on Didymus.”

He had judged correctly and perceived that, in her assault upon the old scholar, she had at first intended to play into the hands of the rulers, work against the old philosopher and his relatives, among whose number was Barine ; for the Egyptian law permitted the relatives of those who were convicted of any crime against the sovereign or the government to be banished with the criminal. This attack upon an innocent person was disgraceful, yet every word Iras uttered made Dion feel, every feature of her face betrayed, that it was not merely base jealousy, but a nobler emotion, that caused her to assail the guiltless sage—love for her mistress, the desire which dominated her whole being to guard Cleopatra from grief and trouble in these trying times. He knew Iras’s iron will and the want of consideration with which she had learned to pursue her purpose at the court. His first object was to protect Barine from the danger which threatened her ; but he also wished to relieve the anxiety of Iras, the daughter of Krates, his father’s neighbour, with whom he had played in boyhood and for whom he had never ceased to feel a tender interest.

His remark surprised her. She saw that her

plot was detected by the man whose esteem she most valued, and a loving woman is glad to recognize the superiority of her lover. Besides, from her earliest childhood—and she was only two years younger than Dion—she had belonged to circles where no quality was more highly prized than mental pliancy and keenness. Her dark eyes, which at first had glittered distrustfully and questioningly and afterwards glowed with a gloomy light, now gained a new expression. Her gaze sought her friend's with a tender, pleading look as, admitting his charge, she began: "Yes! Dion, the philosopher's granddaughter must not stay here. Or do you see any other way to protect the unhappy boy from incalculable misfortune? You know me well enough to be aware that, like you, I am reluctant to infringe another's rights, that except in case of necessity I am not cruel. I value your esteem. No one is more truthful, and yesterday you averred that Eros had no part in your visits to the much-admired young woman, that you joined her guests merely because the society you found at her house afforded a pleasant stimulus to the mind. I have ceased to believe in many things, but not in you and your words, and if hearing that you had taken sides with the grandfather, I fancied that you were secretly seeking the thanks and gratitude of the granddaughter, why—surely the atrocious maxim that Zeus does not hear the vows of lovers comes from you men

—why, suspicion again reared its head. Now you seem to share my opinion——”

“Like you,” Dion interrupted, “I believe that Barine ought to be withdrawn from the boy’s pursuit, which cannot be more unpleasant to you than to her. As Cæsarion neither can nor ought to leave Alexandria while affairs are so threatening, nothing is left except to remove the young woman—but, of course, in all kindness.”

“In a golden chariot, garlanded with roses, if you so desire,” cried Iras eagerly.

“That might attract attention,” answered Dion, smiling and raising his hand as if to enjoin moderation. “Your mode of action does not please me, even now that I know its purpose, but I will gladly aid you to attain your object. Your crooked paths also lead to the goal, and perhaps one is less likely to stumble in them; but straight ways suit me better, and I think I have already found the right one. A friend will invite Barine to an estate far away from here, perhaps in the lake regions.”

“You?” cried Iras, her narrow eyebrows suddenly contracting.

“Do you imagine that she would go with me?” he asked, in a faintly reproachful tone. “No. Fortunately, we have older friends, and at their head is one who happens to be your uncle and at the same time is wax in the hands of the Queen.”

“Archibius?” exclaimed Iras. “Ah! if he could persuade her to do so!”

"He will try. He, too, is anxious about the lad. While we are talking here, he is inviting Barine to his estate. The country air will benefit her."

"May she bloom there like a young shepherdess!"

"You are right to wish her the best fortune; for if the Queen does not return victorious, the irritability of our Alexandrians will be doubled. When you laid hands on Didymus's garden, you were so busily engaged in building the triumphal arch that you forgot——"

"Who would have doubted the successful issue of this war?" cried Iras. "And they will, they will conquer. The Rhodian said that the fleet was scattered. The disaster happened on the Acharnanian coast. How positive it sounded! But he had it only at second and third hand. And what are mere rumours? The source of the false tidings is discovered later. Besides, even if the naval battle were really lost, the powerful army, which is far superior to Octavianus's forces, still remains. Which of the enemy's generals could cope with Antony on the land? How he will fight when all is at stake—fame, honour, sovereignty, hate, and love! Away with this fear, based on mere rumour! After Dyrrachium Cæsar's cause was deemed lost, and how soon Pharsalus made him master of the world! Is it worthy of a sensible person to suffer courage to be depressed by a sailor's gossip? And

yet—yet! It began while I was ill. And then the swallows on the Antonias, the admiral's ship. We have already spoken of it. Mardion and your uncle Zeno saw with their own eyes the strange swallows drive away those which had built their nest on the helm of the Antonias, and kill the young ones with their cruel beaks. An evil omen! I cannot forget it. And my dream, while I lay ill with fever far away from my mistress! But I have already lingered here too long. No, Dion, no. I am grateful for the rest here—I can now feel at ease about Cæsarion. Place the monument where you choose. The people shall see and hear that we respect their opposition, that we are just and friendly. Help me to turn this matter to the advantage of the Queen, and if Archibius succeeds in getting Barine away and keeping her in the country, then—if I had aught that seemed to you desirable it should be yours. But what does the petted Dion care for his fading playfellow?"

"Fading?" he repeated in a tone of indignant reproach. "Say rather the fully developed flower has learned from her royal friend the secret of eternal youth."

With a swift impulse of gratitude Iras bent her face towards him in the dusk, extending the slender white hand—next to Cleopatra's famed as the most beautiful at court—for him to kiss, but when he merely pressed his lips lightly on it with no shadow of tenderness, she hastily withdrew it, exclaiming

as if overwhelmed by sudden repentance: "This idle, hollow dalliance at such a time, with such a burden of anxiety oppressing the heart! It is unworthy, shameful! If Barine goes with Archibius, her time will scarcely hang heavy on his estates. I think I know some one who will speedily follow to bear her company.—Here, Sasis! the bearers! To the Tower of Nilus, before the Gate of the Sun!"

Dion gazed after her litter a short time, then passed his hand through his waving brown hair, walked swiftly to the shore and, without pausing long to choose, sprang into one of the boats which were rented for pleasure voyages. Ordering the sailors who were preparing to accompany him to remain on shore, he stretched the sail with a practised hand, and ran out towards the mouth of the harbour. He needed some strong excitement, and wished to go himself in search of news.

CHAPTER IV.

THE house facing the garden of the Paneum, where Barine lived, was the property of her mother, who had inherited it from her parents. The artist Leonax, the young beauty's father, son of the old philosopher Didymus, had died long before.

After Barine's unhappy marriage with Philostratus was dissolved, she had returned to her mother, who managed the affairs of the household. She too, belonged to a family of scholars and had a brother who had won high repute as a philosopher, and had directed the studies of the young Octavianus. This had occurred long before the commencement of the hostility which separated the heirs of Cæsar and Mark Antony. But even after the latter had deserted Octavia, the sister of Octavianus, to return to Cleopatra, the object of his love, and there was an open breach between the two rivals for the sovereignty of the world, Antony had been friendly to Arius and borne him no grudge for his close relations to his rival. The generous Roman had even given his enemy's former tutor a fine house, to show him that he was glad to have him in Alexandria and near his person.

The widow Berenike, Barine's mother, was warmly attached to her only brother, who often joined her daughter's guests. She was a quiet, modest woman whose happiest days had been passed in superintending the education of her children, Barine, the fiery Hippas, and the quiet Helena, who for several years had lived with her grandparents and, with faithful devotion, assumed the duty of caring for them. She had been more easily guided than the two older children; for the boy's aspiring spirit had often drawn him beyond his mother's control, and the beautiful, vivacious girl had early possessed charms so unusual that she could not remain unnoticed.

Hippas had studied oratory, first in Alexandria and later in Athens and Rhodes. Three years before, his uncle Arius had sent him with excellent letters of introduction to Rome to become acquainted with the life of the capital and try whether, in spite of his origin, his brilliant gifts of eloquence would forward his fortunes there.

Two miserable years with an infamous, unloved husband had changed the wild spirits of Barine's childhood into the sunny cheerfulness now one of her special charms. Her mother was conscious of having desired only her best good in uniting the girl of sixteen to Philostratus, whom the grandfather Didymus then considered a very promising young man, and whose advancement, in addition to his own talents, his brother Alexas, Antony's

favourite, promised to aid. She had believed that this step would afford the gay, beautiful girl the best protection from the perils of the corrupt capital; but the worthless husband had caused both mother and daughter much care and sorrow, while his brother Alexas, who constantly pursued his young sister-in-law with insulting attentions, was the source of almost equal trouble. Berenike often gazed in silent astonishment at the child, who, spite of such sore grief and humiliation, had preserved the innocent light-heartedness which made her seem as if life had offered her only thornless roses.

Her father, Leonax, had been one of the most distinguished artists of the day, and Barine had inherited from him the elastic artist temperament which speedily rebounds from the heaviest pressure. To him also she owed the rare gift of song, which had been carefully cultivated and had already secured her the first position in the woman's chorus at the festival of the great goddesses of the city. Every one was full of her praises, and after she had sung the Yalamos in the palace over the waxen image of the favourite of the gods, slain by the boar, her name was eagerly applauded. To have heard her was esteemed a privilege, for she sang only in her own house or at religious ceremonials "for the honour of the gods."

The Queen, too, had heard her, and, after the

Adonis festival, her uncle Arius had presented her to Antony, who expressed his admiration with all the fervour of his frank nature, and afterwards came to her house a second time, accompanied by his son Antyllus. Doubtless he would have called on her frequently and tested upon her heart his peculiar power over women, had he not been compelled to leave the city on the day after his last visit.

Berenike had reproved her brother for bringing the Queen's lover to Barine, for her anxiety was increased by the repeated visits of Antony's son, and still more aroused by that of Cæsarion, who was presented by Antyllus.

These youths were not numbered among the guests whose presence she welcomed and whose conversation afforded her pleasure. It was flattering that they should honour her simple home by their visits, but she knew that Cæsarion came without his tutor's knowledge, and perceived, by the expression of his eyes, what drew him to her daughter. Besides, Berenike, in rearing the two children, who had been the source of so much anxiety had lost the joyous confidence which had characterized her own youth. Whenever life presented any new phase, she saw the dark side first. If a burning candle stood before her, the shadow of the candlestick caught her eye before the light. Her whole mental existence became a chain of fears, but the kind-hearted woman loved her chil-

dren too tenderly to permit them to see it. Only it was a relief to her heart when some of her evil forebodings were realized, to say that she had foreseen it all.

No trace of this was legible in her face, a countenance still pretty and pleasing in its unruffled placidity. She talked very little, but what she did say was sensible, and proved how attentively she understood how to listen. So she was welcome among Barine's guests. Even the most distinguished received something from her, because he felt that the quiet woman understood him.

Before Barine had returned that evening, something had occurred which made her mother doubly regret the accident to her brother Arius the day before. On his way home from his sister's he had been run over by a chariot darting recklessly along the Street of the King, and was carried, severely injured, to his home, where he now lay helpless and fevered. Nor did it lessen his sufferings to hear his two sons threaten to take vengeance on the reckless fellow who had wrought their father this mischief, for he had reason to believe Antyllus the perpetrator of the deed, and a collision between the youths and the son of Antony could only result in fresh disaster to him and his, especially as the young Roman seemed to have inherited little of his father's magnanimous generosity. Yet Arius could not be vexed with his sons for stigmatizing, in the harshest terms, the conduct of the man

who had gone on without heeding the accident. He had cautioned his sister against the utterly unbridled youth whose father he had himself brought to her house. With what good reason he had raised his voice in warning was now evident. At sunset that very day several guests had arrived as usual, followed by Antyllus, a youth of nineteen. When the door-keeper refused to admit him, he had rudely demanded to see Barine, thrust aside the prudent old porter, who endeavoured to detain him, and, in spite of his protestations, forced his way into his dead master's work-room, where the ladies usually received their visitors. Not until he found it empty would he retire, and then he first fastened a bouquet of flowers he had brought to a statue of Eros in burnt clay, which stood there. Both the porter and Barine's waiting-maid declared that he was drunk; they saw it when he staggered away with the companions who had waited for him in the garden outside.

This unseemly and insulting conduct filled Berenike with the deepest indignation. It must not remain unpunished, and, while waiting for her daughter, she imagined what evil consequences might ensue if Antyllus were forbidden the house and accused to his tutor, and how unbearable, on the other hand, he might become if they omitted to do so.

She was full of sad presentiments, and as, with such good reason, she feared the worst, she cher-

ished a faint hope that her daughter might perhaps bring home some pleasant tidings ; for she had had the experience that events which had filled her with the utmost anxiety sometimes resulted in good fortune.

At last Barine appeared, and it was indeed long since she had clasped her mother in her arms with such joyous cheerfulness.

The widow's troubled heart grew lighter. Her daughter must have met with something unusually gratifying, she looked so happy, although she had surely heard what had happened here ; for her cloak was laid aside and her hair newly arranged, so she must have been to her chamber, where she was dressed by her loquacious Cyprian slave, who certainly could not keep to herself anything that was worth mentioning. The nimble maid had shown her skill that day.

"Any stranger would take her for nineteen," thought her mother. "How becoming the white robe and blue-bordered peplum are to her ; how softly the azure bombyx ribbon is wound around the thick waves of her hair ! Who would believe that no curling-irons had touched the little golden locks that rest so gracefully on her brow, that no paint-brush had any share in producing the rose and white hues on her cheek, or the alabaster glimmer of her arms ? Such beauty easily becomes a Danae dower ; but it is a magnificent gift of the gods ! Yet why did she put on the bracelet which Antony

gave her after his last visit? Scarcely on my account. She can hardly expect Dion at so late an hour. Even while I am rejoicing in the sight of her beauty, some new misfortune may be impending."

So ran the current of her thoughts while her daughter was gaily describing what she had witnessed at her grandfather's. Meanwhile she had nestled comfortably among the cushions of a lounge; and when she mentioned Antyllus's unseemly conduct, she spoke of it, with a carelessness that startled Berenike, as a vexatious piece of rudeness which must not occur again.

"But who is to prevent it?" asked the mother anxiously.

"Who, save ourselves?" replied Barine.

"He will not be admitted."

"And if he forced his way in?"

Barine's big blue eyes flashed angrily, and there was no lack of decision in her voice as she exclaimed, "Let him try it!"

"But what power have we to restrain the son of Antony?" asked Berenike. "I do not know."

"I do," replied her daughter. "I will be brief, for a visitor is coming."

"So late?" asked the mother anxiously.

"Archibius wishes to discuss an important matter with us."

The lines on the brow of the older woman

smoothed, but it contracted again as she exclaimed inquiringly: "Important business at so unusual an hour! Ah, I have expected nothing good since early morning! On my way to my brother's a raven flew up before me and fluttered towards the left into the garden."

"But I," replied Barine, after receiving, in reply to her inquiry, a favourable report concerning her uncle's health—"I met seven—there were neither more nor less; for seven is the best of numbers—seven snow-white doves, which all flew swiftly towards the right. The fairest of all came first, bearing in its beak a little basket which contained the power that will keep Antony's son away from us. Don't look at me in such amazement, you dear receptacle of every terror."

"But, child, you said that Archibius was coming so late to discuss an important matter," rejoined the mother.

"He must be here soon."

"Then cease this talking in riddles; I do not guess them quickly."

"You will solve this one," returned Barine; "but we really have no time to lose. So—my beautiful dove was a good, wise thought, and what it carried in its basket you shall hear presently. You see, mother, many will blame us, though here and there some one may pity; but this state of things must not continue. I feel it more and more plainly with each passing day; and several

years must yet elapse ere this scruple becomes wholly needless. I am too young to welcome as a guest every one whom this or that man presents to me. True, our reception-hall was my father's work-room and you, my own estimable, blameless mother, are the hostess here; but though superior to me in every respect, you are so modest that you shield yourself behind your daughter until the guests think of you only when you are absent. So those who seek us both merely say, 'I am going to visit Barine'—and there are too many who say this—I can no longer choose, and this thought——"

"Child! child!" interrupted her mother joyfully, "what god met you as you went out this morning?"

"Surely you know," she answered gaily; "it was seven doves, and, when I took the little basket from the bill of the first and prettiest one, it told me a story. Do you want to hear it?"

"Yes, yes; but be quick, or we shall be interrupted."

Then Barine leaned farther back among the cushions, lowered her long lashes, and began: "Once upon a time there was a woman who had a garden in the most aristocratic quarter of the city—here near the Paneum, if you please. In the autumn, when the fruit was ripening, she left the gate open, though all her neighbours did the opposite. To keep away unbidden lovers of her nice

figs and dates, she fastened on the gate a tablet bearing the inscription: 'All may enter and enjoy the sight of the garden; but the dogs will bite any one who breaks a flower, treads upon the grass, or steals the fruit.'

"The woman had nothing but a lap-dog, and that did not always obey her. But the tablet fulfilled its purpose; for at first none came except her neighbours in the aristocratic quarter. They read the threat, and probably without it would have respected the property of the woman who so kindly opened the door to them. Thus matters went on for a time, until first a beggar came, and then a Phœnician sailor, and a thievish Egyptian from the Rhakotis—neither of whom could read. So the tablet told them nothing; and as, moreover, they distinguished less carefully between mine and thine, one trampled the turf and another snatched from the boughs a flower or fruit. More and more of the rabble came, and you can imagine what followed. No one punished them for the crime, for they did not fear the barking of the lap-dog, and this gave even those who could read, courage not to heed the warning. So the woman's pretty garden soon lost its peculiar charm; and the fruit, too, was stolen. When the rain at last washed the inscription from the tablet, and saucy boys scrawled on it, there was no harm done; for the garden no longer offered any attractions, and no one who looked into it cared to enter. Then the

owner closed her gate like the neighbours, and the next year she again enjoyed the green grass and the bright hues of the flowers. She ate her fruit herself, and the lap-dog no longer disturbed her by its barking."

"That is," said her mother, "if everybody was as courteous and as well bred as Gorgias, Lysias, and the others, we would gladly continue to receive them. But since there are rude fellows like Antyllus——"

"You have understood the story correctly," Barine interrupted. "We are certainly at liberty to invite to our house those who have learned to read our inscription. To-morrow visitors will be informed that we can no longer receive them as before."

"Antyllus's conduct affords an excellent pretext," her mother added. "Every fair-minded person must understand——"

"Certainly," said Barine, "and if you, shrewdest of women, will do your part——"

"Then for the first time we can act as we please in our own home. Believe me, child—if you only do not——"

"No ifs!—not this time!" cried the young beauty, raising her hand beseechingly. "It gives me such delight to think of the new life, and if matters come to pass as I hope and wish—then—do not you also believe, mother, that the gods owe me reparation?"

“For what?” asked the deep voice of Archibius, who had entered unannounced, and was now first noticed by the widow and her daughter.

Barine hastily rose and held out both hands to her old friend, exclaiming, “Since they bring you to us, they are already beginning the payment.”

CHAPTER V.

AN artist, especially a great artist, finds it easy to give his house an attractive appearance. He desires comfort in it, and only the beautiful *is* comfortable to him. Whatever would disturb harmony offends his eye; and to secure the noblest ornament of his house he need not invite any stranger to cross its threshold. The Muse, the best of assistants, joins him unbidden.

Leonax, Barine's father, had been thus aided to transform the interior of his house into a very charming residence. He had painted on the walls of his own work-room incidents in the life of Alexander the Great, the founder of his native city, and on the frieze a procession of dancing Cupids.

Here Barine now received her guests, and the renown of these paintings was not one of the smallest inducements which had led Antony to visit the young beauty and to take his son, in whom he wished to awaken at least a fleeting pleasure in art. He also knew how to prize her beauty and her singing, but the ardent passion which had taken possession of him in his mature years was for Cle-

opatra alone. He whose easily won heart and susceptible fancy had urged him from one commonplace love to another had been bound by the Queen with chains of indestructible and supernatural power. By her side a Barine seemed to him merely a work of art endowed with life and a voice that charmed the ear. Yet he owed her some pleasant hours, and he could not help bestowing gifts upon any one to whom he was indebted for anything pleasant. He liked to be considered the most generous spendthrift on earth, and the polished bracelet set with a gem, on which was carved Apollo playing on his lyre, surrounded by the listening Muses, looked very simple, but was really an ornament of priceless value, for the artist who made it was deemed the best stone-cutter in Alexandria in the time of Philadelphus, and each one of the tiny figures sculptured on the bit of onyx scarcely three fingers wide was a carefully executed masterpiece of the most exquisite beauty. Antony had chosen it because he deemed it a fitting gift for the woman whose song had pleased him. He had not thought of asking its value; indeed, only a connoisseur would have perceived it; and as the circlet was not showy and well became her beautiful arm, Barine liked to wear it.

Had not the war taken him away, Antony's second visit would certainly not have been his last. Besides the singing which enthralled him, the conversation had been gay and brilliant, and in addi-

tion to Leonax's paintings, he had seen other beautiful works of art which the former had obtained by exchanging with many distinguished companions.

Nor was there any lack of plastic creations in the spacious apartment, to which the flashing of the water poured by a powerful man from the goatskin bottle on his shoulder into a shell lent a special charm.

The master who had carved this stooping Nubian had also created the much-discussed statues of the royal lovers. The clay Eros, who with bent knee was aiming at a victim visible to himself alone, was also his work. Antony, when paying his second visit, had laughingly laid the garland he wore before "the greatest of human conquerors," while a short time ago his son Antyllus had rudely thrust his bouquet of flowers into the opening of the curved right arm which was drawing the string. In doing so the statue had been injured. Now the flowers lay unheeded upon the little altar at the end of the large room, lighted only by a single lamp; for the ladies had left it with their guest. They were in Barine's favourite apartment, a small room, where there were several pictures by her dead father.

Antyllus's bouquet, and the damage to the clay statue of Eros, had played a prominent part in the conversation between the three, and rendered Archibius's task easier.

Berenike had greeted the guest with a complaint of the young Roman's recklessness and unseemly conduct, to which Barine added the declaration that they had now sacrificed enough to Zeus Xenios, the god of hospitality. She meant to devote her future life to the modest household gods and to Apollo, to whom she owed the gift of song.

Archibius had listened silently in great surprise until she had finished her explanation and declared that henceforth she intended to live alone with her mother, instead of having her father's workshop filled with guests.

The young beauty's vivid imagination transported her to this new and quieter life. But, spite of the clear and glowing hues in which she described her anticipations, her grey-haired listener could not have believed in them fully. A subtle smile sometimes flitted over his grave, somewhat melancholy face—that of a man who has ceased to wrestle in the arena of life, and after severe conflict now preferred to stand among the spectators and watch others win or lose the prize of victory. Doubtless the wounds which he had received still ached, yet his sorrowful experiences did not prevent his being an attentive observer. The expression of his clear eyes showed that he mentally shared whatever aroused his sympathy. Whoever understood how to listen thus, and, moreover—the prominence of the brow above the nose showed it—was also a trained thinker, could not fail to be a

good counsellor, and as such he was regarded by many, and first of all by the Queen.

The wise deliberation, which was one of his characteristic traits, showed itself on this occasion also, for though he had come to persuade Barine to try a country residence, he refrained from doing so until she had exhausted the story of her own affairs and inquired the important cause of his visit.

In the principal matter his request was granted ere he made it. So he could begin with the query whether the mother and daughter did not think that the transition to the new mode of life could be effected more easily if they were absent from the city a short time. It would awaken comment if they should close their house against guests on the morrow, and as the true reason could not be given, many would be offended. If, on the contrary, they could resolve to quit the capital for a few weeks, many, it is true, would lament their decision, but what was allotted to all alike could be resented by no one.

Berenike eagerly assented, but Barine grew thoughtful. Then Archibius begged her to speak frankly, and after she had asked where they could go, he proposed his country estate.

His keen grey eyes had perceived that something bound her so firmly to the city that in the case of a true woman like Barine it must be an affair of the heart. He had evidently judged cor-

rectly, for, at his prediction that there would be no lack of visits from her dearest friends, she raised her head, her blue eyes sparkled more brightly, and when Archibius paused she turned to her mother, exclaiming gaily :

“ We will go ! ”

Again the vivid imagination of the artist's daughter conjured the future before her in distinct outlines. She alone knew whom she meant when she spoke of the visitor she expected at Irenia, Archibius's estate. The name meant “ The place of peace,” and it pleased her.

Archibius listened smilingly ; but when she began to assign him also a part in driving the little Sardinian horses and pursuing the birds, he interrupted her with the statement that whether he could speedily allow himself a pleasure which he should so keenly enjoy—that of breathing the country air with such charming guests—would depend upon the fate of another. Thank the gods, he had been able to come here with a lighter heart, because, just before his departure, he had heard of a splendid victory gained by the Queen. The ladies would perhaps permit him to remain a little longer, as he was expecting confirmation of the news.

It was evident that he awaited it in great suspense, and that his heart was by no means free from anxiety.

Berenike shared it, and her pleasant face, which

had hitherto reflected her delight at her daughter's sensible resolution, was now clouded with care as Archibius began: "The object of my presence here? You are making it very easy for me to attain it. If I deemed it honest, I could now conceal the fact that I had sought you to induce you to leave the city. I see no peril from the boyish insolence of the son of Antony. The point in question, child, is merely to put yourself out of the reach of Cæsarion."

"If you could place me in the moon, it would please me best, as far as he is concerned," replied Barine eagerly. "That is just what induced me to change our mode of life, since my door cannot be closed against the boy who, though still under a tutor, uses his rank as a key to open it. And just think of being compelled to address that dreamer, with eyes pleading for help, by the title of 'king'!"

"Yet what mighty impulse might not be slumbering in the breast of a son of Julius Cæsar and Cleopatra?" said Archibius. "And passion—I know, my child, that it is no fault of yours—has now awakened within him. Whatever the result may be, it must fill his mother's heart with anxiety. That is why it is needful to hasten your departure, and to keep your destination a secret. He will attempt no violence; but—he is the child of his parents—and some unexpected act may be anticipated from him."

"You startle me!" cried Barine. "You transform the cooing dove which entered my house into a dangerous griffin."

"As such you may regard him," said the other, warningly. "You will be a welcome guest, Barine, but I invited you, whom I have loved from your earliest childhood, the daughter of my dearest friend, not merely to do you a service at Irenia, but to save from grief or even annoyance the person to whom—who is not aware of it—I owe everything."

The words conveyed to both ladies the knowledge that, though they were dear to Archibius, he would sacrifice them, and with them, perhaps, all the rest of the world, for the peace and happiness of the Queen.

Barine had expected nothing else. She knew that Cleopatra had made the philosopher's son a wealthy man and the owner of extensive estates; but she also felt that the source of his loyal devotion to the Queen, over whom he watched like a tender father, was due to other causes. Cleopatra prized him also. Had he been ambitious, he could have stood at the helm of the ship of state, as Epitrop long ago, but—the whole city knew it—he had more than once refused to accept a permanent office, because he believed that he could serve his mistress better as an unassuming, unnoticed counsellor. Berenike had told Barine that the relations between Cleopatra and Archibius dated

back to their childhood, but she had learned no particulars. Various rumours were afloat which, in the course of time, had been richly adorned and interwoven with anecdotes, and Barine naturally lent the most ready credence to those which asserted that the princess, in her earliest youth, had cherished a childish love for the philosopher's son. Now her friend's conduct led her to believe it.

When Archibius paused, the young beauty assured him that she understood him; and as the alabaster hanging lamp and a three-branched light cast a brilliant glow upon the portrait which her father had painted of the nineteen-year-old Queen, and afterwards copied for his own household, she pointed to it, and, pursuing the current of her own thoughts, asked the question :

"Was she not marvellously beautiful at that time?"

"As your father's work represents her," was the reply. "Leonax painted the portrait of Octavia, on the opposite side, the same year, and perhaps the artist deemed the Roman the fairer woman." He pointed as he spoke to a likeness of Octavianus's sister, whom Barine's father had painted as the young wife of Marcellus, her first husband.

"Oh, no!" said Berenike. "I still remember perfectly how Leonax returned in those days. What woman might not have been jealous of his enthusiasm for the Roman Hera? At that time I had not seen the portrait, and when I asked

whether he thought Octavia more beautiful than the Queen, for whom Eros had inflamed his heart, as in the case of most of the beautiful women he painted, he exclaimed—you know his impetuous manner—‘Octavia stands foremost in the ranks of those who are called “beautiful” or “less beautiful”; the other, Cleopatra, stands alone, and can be compared with no one.’”

Archibius bent his head in assent, then said firmly, “But, as a child, when I first saw her, she would have been the fairest even in the dance of the young gods of love.”

“How old was she then?” asked Barine, eagerly.

“Eight years,” he answered. “How far in the past it is, yet I have not forgotten a single hour!”

Barine now earnestly entreated him to tell them the story of those days, but Archibius gazed thoughtfully at the floor for some time ere he raised his head and answered: “Perhaps it will be well if you learn more of the woman for whose sake I ask a sacrifice at your hands. Arius is your brother and uncle. He stands near to Octavianus, for he was his intellectual guide, and I know that he reveres the Roman’s sister, Octavia, as a goddess. Antony is now struggling with Octavianus for the sovereignty of the world. Octavia succumbed in the conflict against the woman of whom you desire to hear. It is not my place to judge her, but I may instruct and warn. Roman nations burn

incense to Octavia, and, when Cleopatra's name is uttered, they veil their faces indignantly. Here in Alexandria many imitate them. Whoever upholds shining purity may hope to win a share of the radiance emanating from it. They call Octavia the lawful wife, and Cleopatra the criminal who robbed her of her husband's heart."

"Not I!" exclaimed Barine eagerly. "How often I have heard my uncle say that Antony and Cleopatra were fired with the most ardent love for each other! Never did the arrows of Eros pierce two hearts more deeply. Then it became necessary to save the state from civil war and bloodshed. Antony consented to form an alliance with his rival, and, as security for the sincerity of the reconciliation, he gave his hand in marriage to Octavia, whose first husband, Marcellus, had just died—his hand, I say, only his hand, for his heart was captive to the Queen of Egypt. And if Antony was faithless to the wife to whom statecraft had bound him, he kept his pledge to the other, who had an earlier, better title. If Cleopatra did not give up the man to whom she had sworn fidelity forever, she was right—a thousand times right! In my eyes—no matter how often my mother rebukes me—Cleopatra, in the eyes of the immortals, is and always will be Antony's real wife; the other, though on her marriage day no custom, no word, no stroke of the stylus, no gesture was omitted, is the intruder in a bond of love

which rejoices the gods, however it may anger mortals, and—forgive me, mother—virtuous matrons.”

Berenike had listened with blushing cheeks to her vivacious daughter; now with timid earnestness she interrupted: “I know that those are the views of the new times; that Antony in the eyes of the Egyptians, and probably also according to their customs, is the rightful husband of the Queen. I know, too, that you are both against me. Yet Cleopatra is in reality a Greek, and therefore—eternal gods!—I can sincerely pity her; but the marriage has been solemnized, and I cannot blame Octavia. She rears and cherishes, as if they were her own, the children of her faithless husband and Fulvia, his first wife, who have no claim upon her. It is more than human to take the stones from the path of the man who became her foe, as she does. No woman in Alexandria can pray more fervently than I that Cleopatra and her friend may conquer Octavianus. His cold nature, highly as my brother esteems him, is repellent to me. But when I gaze at Octavia’s beautiful, chaste, queenly, noble countenance, the mirror of true womanly purity——”

“You can rejoice,” Archibius added, completing the sentence, and laying his right hand soothingly on the arm of the excited woman, “only it would be advisable at this time to put the portrait elsewhere, and rest satisfied with confiding your

opinion of Octavia to your brother and a friend as reliable as myself. If we conquer, such things may pass; if not— The messenger tarries long—”

Here Barine again entreated him to use the time. She had only once had the happiness of being noticed by the Queen—just after her song at the Adonis festival. Then Cleopatra had advanced to thank her. She said only a few kind words, but in a voice which seemed to penetrate the inmost depths of her heart and bind her with invisible threads. Meanwhile Barine’s eyes met those of her sovereign, and at first they roused an ardent desire to press her lips even on the hem of her robe, but afterwards she felt as if a venomous serpent had crawled out of the most beautiful flower.

Here Archibius interrupted her with the remark that he remembered perfectly how, after the song, Antony had addressed her at the same time as the Queen, and Cleopatra lacked no feminine weakness.

“Jealousy?” asked Barine, in astonishment. “I was not presumptuous enough to admit it. I secretly feared that Alexas, the brother of Philostratus, had prejudiced her. He is as ill-disposed towards me as the man who was my husband. But everything connected with those two is so base and shameful that I will not allow it to cloud this pleasant hour. Yet the fear that Alexas might have slandered me to the Queen is not groundless.

He is as shrewd as his brother, and through Antony, into whose favour he ingratiated himself, is always in communication with Cleopatra. He went to the war with him."

"I learned that too late, and am utterly powerless against Antony," replied Archibius.

"But was it not natural that I should fear he had prejudiced the Queen?" asked Barine. "At any rate, I imagined that I detected a hostile expression in her eyes, and it repelled me, though at first I had been so strongly attracted towards her."

"And had not that other stepped between you, you could not have turned from her again!" said Archibius. "The first time I saw her I was but a mere boy, and she—as I have already said—a child eight years old."

Barine nodded gratefully to Archibius, brought the distaff to her mother, poured water into the wine in the mixing vessel, and after at first leaning comfortably back among the cushions, she soon bent forward in a listening attitude, with her elbow propped on her knee, and her chin supported by her hand. Berenike drew the flax from the distaff, at first slowly, then faster and faster.

"You know my country-house in the Kanopus," the guest began. "It was originally a small summer palace belonging to the royal family, and underwent little change after we moved into it. Even the garden is unaltered. It was full of

shady old trees. Olympus, the leech, had chosen this place, that my father might complete within its walls the work of education entrusted to him. You shall hear the story. At that time Alexandria was in a state of turmoil, for Rome had not recognized the King, and ruled over us like Fate, though it had not acknowledged the will by which the miserable Alexander bequeathed Egypt to him like a field or a slave.

"The King of Egypt, who called himself 'the new Dionysus,' was a weak man, whose birth did not give him the full right to the sovereignty. You know that the people called him the 'flute-player.' He really had no greater pleasure than to hear music and listen to his own performances. He played by no means badly on more than one instrument, and, moreover, as a reveller did honour to the other name. Whoever kept sober at the festival of Dionysus, whose incarnate second self he regarded himself, incurred his deepest displeasure.

"The flute-player's wife, Queen Tryphœna, and her oldest daughter—she bore your name, Berenike—ruined his life. Compared with them, the King was worthy and virtuous. What had become of the heroes and the high-minded princes of the house of Ptolemy? Every passion and crime had found a home in their palaces!

"The flute-player, Cleopatra's father, was by no means the worst. He was a slave to his own

caprices; no one had taught him to bridle his passions. Where it served his purpose, even death was summoned to his aid; but this was a custom of the last sovereigns of his race. In one respect he was certainly superior to most of them—he still possessed a capacity to feel a loathing for the height of crime, to believe in virtue and loftiness of soul, and the possibility of implanting them in youthful hearts. When a boy, he had been under the influence of an excellent teacher, whose precepts had lingered in his memory and led him to determine to withdraw his favourite children—two girls—from their mother's sway, at least as far as possible.

“I learned afterwards that it had been his desire to confide the princesses wholly to my parents' care. But an invincible power opposed this. Though Greeks might be permitted to instruct the royal children in knowledge, the Egyptians would not yield the right to their religious education. The leech Olympus—you know the good old man—had insisted that the delicate Cleopatra must spend the coldest winter months in Upper Egypt, where the sky was never clouded, and the summer near the sea in a shady garden. The little palace at Kanopus was devoted to this purpose.

“When we moved there it was entirely unoccupied, but the princesses were soon to be brought to us. During the winter Olympus preferred the island of Philæ, on the Nubian frontier, because

the famous Temple of Isis was there, and its priests willingly undertook to watch over the children.

“The Queen would not listen to any of these plans. Leaving Alexandria and spending the winter on a lonely island in the tropics was an utterly incomprehensible idea. So she let the King have his way, and no doubt was glad to be relieved from the care of the children; for, even after her royal husband's exile from the city, she never visited her daughters. True, death allowed her only a short time to do so.

“Her oldest daughter, Berenike, who became her successor, followed her example, and troubled herself very little about her sisters. I heard afterwards that she was very glad to know that they were in charge of persons who filled their minds with other thoughts than the desire to rule. Her brothers were reared at Lochias by our countryman Theodotus, under the eyes of their guardian, Pothinus.

“Our family life was of course wholly transformed by the reception of the royal children. In the first place, we moved from our house in the Museum Square into the little palace at Kanopus, and the big, shady garden delighted us. I remember, as though it were but yesterday, the morning—I was then a boy of fifteen—when my father told us that two of the King's daughters would soon become members of the household. There

were three of us children—Charmian, who went to the war with the Queen, because Iras, our niece, was ill; I myself; and Straton, who died long ago. We were urged to treat the princesses with the utmost courtesy and consideration, and we perceived that their reception really demanded respect; for the palace, which we had found empty and desolate, was refurnished from roof to foundation.

“The day before they were expected horses, chariots, and litters came, while boats and a splendid state galley, fully manned, arrived by sea. Then a train of male and female slaves appeared, among them two fat eunuchs.

“I can still see the angry look with which my father surveyed all these people. He drove at once to the city, and on his return his clear eyes were as untroubled as ever. A court official accompanied him, and only that portion of the useless amount of luggage and number of persons that my father desired remained.

“The princesses were to come the next morning—it was at the end of February—flowers were blooming in the grass and on the bushes, while the foliage of the trees glittered with the fresh green which the rising sap gives to the young leaves. I was sitting on a strong bough of a sycamore-tree, which grew opposite to the house, watching for them. Their arrival was delayed and, as I gazed meanwhile over the garden, I

thought it must surely please them, for not a palace in the city had one so beautiful.

“At last the litters appeared; they had neither runners nor attendants, as my father had requested, and when the princesses alighted—both at the same moment—I knew not which way to turn my eyes first, for the creature that fluttered like a dragon-fly rather than stepped from the first litter, was not a girl like other mortals—she seemed like a wish, a hope. When the dainty, beautiful creature turned her head hither and thither, and at last gazed questioningly, as if beseeching help, into the faces of my father and mother, who stood at the gate to receive her, it seemed to me that such must have been the aspect of Psyche when she stood pleading for mercy at the throne of Zeus.

“But it was worth while to look at the other also. Was that Cleopatra? She might have been the elder, for she was as tall as her sister, but how utterly unlike! From the waving hair to every movement of the hands and body the former—it *was* Cleopatra—had seemed to me as if she were flying. Everything about the second figure, on the contrary, was solid, nay, even seemed to offer positive resistance. She sprang from the litter and alighted on the ground with both feet at once, clung firmly to the door, and haughtily flung back her head, crowned with a wealth of dark locks. Her complexion was pink and white, and her blue eyes sparkled brightly enough; but the expression

with which she gazed at my parents was defiant rather than questioning, and as she glanced around her red lips curled scornfully as though she deemed her surroundings despicable and unworthy of her royal birth.

“This irritated me against the seven-year-old child, yet I said to myself that, though it was very beautiful here—thanks to my father’s care—perhaps it appeared plain and simple when compared with the marble, gold, and purple of the royal palace whence she came. Her features, too, were regular and beautiful, and she would have attracted attention by her loveliness among a multitude. When I soon heard her issue imperious commands and defiantly insist upon the fulfilment of every wish, I thought, in my boyish ignorance, that Arsinoë must be the elder; for she was better suited to wield a sceptre than her sister. I said so to my brother and Charmian; but we all soon saw which really possessed queenly majesty; for Arsinoë, if her will were crossed, wept, screamed, and raged like a lunatic, or, if that proved useless, begged and teased; while if Cleopatra wanted anything she obtained it in a different way. Even at that time she knew what weapons would give her victory and, while using them, she still remained the child of a king.

“No artisan’s daughter could have been further removed from airs of majestic pathos than this embodiment of the most charming childlike grace;

but if anything for which her passionate nature ardently longed was positively refused, she understood how to attain it by the melody of her voice, the spell of her eyes, and in extreme cases by a silent tear. When to such tears were added uplifted hands and a few sweet words, such as, 'It would make me happy,' or, 'Don't you see how it hurts me?' resistance was impossible; and in after-years also her silent tears and the marvellous music of her voice won her a victory in the decisive questions of life.

"We children were soon playmates and friends, for my parents did not wish the princesses to begin their studies until after they felt at home with us. This pleased Arsinoë, although she could already read and write; but Cleopatra more than once asked to hear something from my father's store of wisdom, of which she had been told.

"The King and her former teacher had cherished the highest expectations from the brilliant intellect of this remarkable child, and Olympus once laid his hand on my curls and bade me take care that the princess did not outstrip the philosopher's son. I had always occupied one of the foremost places, and laughingly escaped, assuring him that there was no danger.

"But I soon learned that this warning was not groundless. You will think that the old fool's heart has played him a trick, and in the magic garden of childish memories the gifted young girl

was transformed into a goddess. That she certainly was not; for the immortals are free from the faults and weaknesses of humanity."

"And what robbed Cleopatra of the renown of resembling the gods?" asked Barine eagerly.

A subtle smile, not wholly free from reproach, accompanied Archibius's reply: "Had I spoken of her virtues, you would hardly have thought of asking further details. But why should I try to conceal what she has displayed to the world openly enough throughout her whole life? Falsehood and hypocrisy were as unfamiliar to her as fishing is to the sons of the desert. The fundamental principles which have dominated this rare creature's life and character to the present day are two ceaseless desires: first, to surpass every one, even in the most difficult achievements; and, secondly, to love and to be loved in return. From them emanated what raised her above all other women. Ambition and love will also sustain her like two mighty wings on the proud height to which they have borne her, so long as they dwell harmoniously in her fiery soul. Hitherto a rare favour of destiny has permitted this, and may the Olympians grant that thus it may ever be!"

Here Archibius paused, wiped the perspiration from his brow, asked if the messenger had arrived, and ordered him to be admitted as soon as he appeared. Then he went on as calmly as before:

“The princesses were members of our household, and in the course of time they seemed like sisters. During the first winter the King allowed them to spend only the most inclement months at Philæ, for he was unwilling to live without them. True, he saw them rarely enough; weeks often elapsed without a visit; but, on the other hand, he often came day after day to our garden, clad in plain garments, and borne in an unpretending litter, for these visits were kept secret from every one save the leech Olympus.

“I often saw the tall, strong man, with red, bloated face, playing with his children like a mechanic who had just returned from work. But he usually remained only a short time, seeming to be satisfied with having seen them again. Perhaps he merely wished to assure himself that they were comfortable with us. At any rate, no one was permitted to go near the group of plane-trees where he talked with them.

“But it is easy to hide amid the dense foliage of these trees, so my knowledge that he questioned them is not solely hearsay.

“Cleopatra was happy with us from the beginning; Arsinoë needed a longer time; but the King valued only the opinion of his older child, his darling, on whom he feasted his eyes and ears like a lover. He often shook his heavy head at the sight of her, and when she gave him one of her apt replies, he laughed so loudly that the sound of his

deep, resonant voice was heard as far as the house.

"Once I saw tear after tear course down his flushed cheeks, and yet his visit was shorter than usual. The closed *harmamaxa* in which he came bore him from our house directly to the vessel which was to convey him to Cyprus and Rome. The Alexandrians, headed by the Queen, had forced him to leave the city and the country.

"He was indeed unworthy of the crown, but he loved his little daughter like a true father. Still, it was terrible, monstrous for him to invoke curses upon the mother and sister of the children, in their presence, and in the same breath command them to hate and execrate them, but to love and never forget him.

"I was then seventeen and Cleopatra ten years old. I, who loved my parents better than my life, felt an icy chill run through my veins and then a touch upon my heart like balsam, as I heard little Arsinoë, after her father had gone, whisper to her sister, 'We will hate them—may the gods destroy them!' and when Cleopatra answered with tearful eyes, 'Let us rather be better than they, very good indeed, Arsinoë, that the immortals may love us and bring our father back.'

"'Because then he will make you Queen,' replied Arsinoë sneeringly, still trembling with angry excitement.

"Cleopatra gazed at her with a troubled look.

Her tense features showed that she was weighing the meaning of the words, and I can still see her as she suddenly drew up her small figure, and said proudly, 'Yes, I will be Queen!'

"Then her manner changed, and in the sweetest tones of her soft voice, she said beseechingly, 'You won't say such naughty things again, will you?'

"This was at the time that my father's instruction began to take possession of her mind. The prediction of Olympus was fulfilled. True, I attended the school of oratory, but when my father set the royal maiden a lesson, I was permitted to repeat mine on the same subject, and frequently I could not help admitting that Cleopatra had succeeded better than I.

"Soon there were difficult problems to master, for the intellect of this wonderful child demanded stronger food, and she was introduced into philosophy. My father himself belonged to the school of Epicurus, and succeeded far beyond his expectations in rousing Cleopatra's interest in his master's teachings. She had been made acquainted with the other great philosophers also, but always returned to Epicurus, and induced the rest of us to live with her as a true disciple of the noble Samian.

"Your father and brother have doubtless made you familiar with the precepts of the Stoa; yet you have certainly heard that Epicurus spent the

latter part of his life with his friends and pupils in quiet meditation and instructive conversation in his garden at Athens. We, too—according to Cleopatra's wish—were to live thus and call ourselves 'disciples of Epicurus.'

"With the exception of Arsinoë, who preferred gayer pastimes, into which she drew my brother Straton—at that time a giant in strength—we all liked the plan. I was chosen master, but I perceived that Cleopatra desired the position, so she took my place.

"During our next leisure afternoon we paced up and down the garden, and the conversation about the chief good was so eager, Cleopatra directed it with so much skill, and decided doubtful questions so happily, that we reluctantly obeyed the brazen gong which summoned us to the house, and spent the whole evening in anticipating the next afternoon.

"The following morning my father saw several country people assembled before the secluded garden; but he did not have time to inquire what they wanted; for Timagenes, who shared the instruction in history—you know he was afterwards taken to Rome as a prisoner of war—rushed up to him, holding out a tablet which bore the inscription Epicurus had written on the gate of his garden: 'Stranger, here you will be happy; here is the chief good, pleasure.'

"Cleopatra had written this notice in large let-

ters on the top of a small table before sunrise, and a slave had secretly fastened it on the gate for her.

"This prank might have easily proved fatal to our beautiful companionship, but it had been done merely to make our game exactly like the model.

"My father did not forbid our continuing this pastime, but strictly prohibited our calling ourselves 'Epicureans' outside of the garden, for this noble name had since gained among the people a significance wholly alien. Epicurus says that true pleasure is to be found only in peace of mind and absence of pain."

"But every one," interrupted Barine, "believes that people like the wealthy Isidorus, whose object in life is to take every pleasure which his wealth can procure, are the real Epicureans. My mother would not have confided me long to a teacher by whose associates 'pleasure' was deemed the chief good."

"The daughter of a philosopher," replied Archibius, gently shaking his head, "ought to understand what pleasure means in the sense of Epicurus, and no doubt you do. True, those who are further removed from these things cannot know that the master forbids yearning for individual pleasure. Have you an idea of his teachings? No definite one? Then permit me a few words of explanation. It happens only too often that Epicurus is confounded with Aristippus, who places sensual pleasure above intellectual enjoyment, as

he holds that bodily pain is harder to endure than mental anguish. Epicurus, on the contrary, considers intellectual pleasure to be the higher one; for sensual enjoyment, which he believes free to every one, can be experienced only in the present, while intellectual delight extends to both the past and the future. To the Epicureans the goal of life, as has already been mentioned, is to attain the chief blessings, peace of mind, and freedom from pain. He is to practise virtue only because it brings him pleasure; for who could remain virtuous without being wise, noble, and just?—and whoever is all these cannot have his peace of mind disturbed, and must be really happy in the exact meaning of the master. I perceived long since the peril lurking in this system of instruction, which takes no account of moral excellence; but at that time it seemed to me also the chief good.

“How all this charmed the mind of the thoughtful child, still untouched by passion! It was difficult to supply her wonderfully vigorous intellect with sufficient sustenance, and she really felt that to enrich it was the highest pleasure. And to her, who could scarcely endure to have a rude hand touch her, though a small grief or trivial disappointment could not be averted, the freedom from pain which the master had named as the first condition for the existence of every pleasure, and termed the chief good, seemed indeed the first condition of a happy life.

"Yet this child, whom my father once compared to a thinking flower, bore without complaint her sad destiny—her father's banishment, her mother's death, her sister Berenike's profligacy. Even to me, in whom she found a second brother and fully trusted, she spoke of these sorrowful things only in guarded allusions. I know that she understood what was passing fully and perfectly, and how deeply she felt it; but pain placed itself between her and the 'chief good,' and she mastered it. And when she sat at work, with what tenacious power the delicate creature struggled until she had conquered the hardest task and outstripped Charmian and even me!

"In those days I understood why, among the gods, a maiden rules over learning, and why she is armed with the weapons of war. You have heard how many languages Cleopatra speaks. A remark of Timagenes had fallen into her soul like a seed. 'With every language you learn,' he had said, 'you will gain a nation.' But there were many peoples in her father's kingdom, and when she was Queen they must all love her. True, she began with the tongue of the conquerors, not the conquered. So it happened that we first learned Lucretius, who reproduces in verse the doctrines of Epicurus. My father was our teacher, and the second year she read Lucretius as if it were a Greek book. She had only half known Egyptian; now she speedily acquired it. During our stay at

Philæ she found a troglodyte who was induced to teach her his language. There were Jews enough here in Alexandria to instruct her in theirs, and she also learned its kindred tongue, Arabic.

“When, many years later, she visited Antony at Tarsus, the warriors imagined that some piece of Egyptian magic was at work, for she addressed each commander in his own tongue, and talked with him as if she were a native of the same country.

“It was the same with everything. She outstripped us in every branch of study. To her burning ambition it would have been unbearable to lag behind.

“The Roman Lucretius became her favourite poet, although she was no more friendly to his nation than I, but the self-conscious power of the foe pleased her, and once I heard her exclaim : ‘Ah ! if the Egyptians were Romans, I would give up our garden for Berenike’s throne.’

“Lucretius constantly led her back to Epicurus, and awakened a severe conflict in her unresting mind. You probably know that he teaches that life in itself is not so great a blessing that it must be deemed a misfortune *not to live*. It is only spoiled by having death appear to us as the greatest of misfortunes. Only the soul which ceases to regard death as a misfortune finds peace. Whoever knows that thought and feeling end with life

will not fear death ; for, no matter how many dear and precious things the dead have left here below, their yearning for them has ceased with life. He declares that providing for the body is the greatest folly, while the Egyptian religion, in which Anubis strove to strengthen her faith, maintained precisely the opposite.

“ To a certain degree he succeeded, for his personality exerted a powerful influence over her ; and besides, she naturally took great pleasure in mystical, supernatural things, as my brother Straton did in physical strength, and you, Barine, enjoy the gift of song. You know Anubis by sight. What Alexandrian has not seen this remarkable man ?—and whoever has once met his eyes does not easily forget him. He does indeed rule over mysterious powers, and he used them in his intercourse with the young princess. It is his work if she cleaves to the religious belief of her people, if she who is a Hellene to the last drop of blood loves Egypt, and is ready to make any sacrifice for her independence and grandeur. She is called ‘the new Isis,’ but Isis presides over the magic arts of the Egyptians, and Anubis initiated Cleopatra into this secret science, and even persuaded her to enter the observatory and the laboratory——

“ But all these things had their origin in our garden of Epicurus, and my father did not venture to forbid it ; for the King had sent a message from Rome to say that he was glad to have Cleopatra

find pleasure in her own people and their secret knowledge.

“The flute-player, during his stay on the Tiber, had given his gold to the right men or bound them as creditors to his interest. After Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus had concluded their alliance, they consented at Lucca to the restoration of the Ptolemy. Millions upon millions would not have seemed to him too large a price for this object. Pompey would rather have gone to Egypt himself, but the jealousy of the others would not permit it. Gabinius, the Governor of Syria, received the commission.

“But the occupants of the Egyptian throne were not disposed to resign it without a struggle. You know that meanwhile Queen Berenike, Cleopatra’s sister, had been twice married. She had her miserable first husband strangled—a more manly spouse had been chosen by the Alexandrians for her second consort. He bravely defended his rights, and lost his life on the field of battle.

“The senate learned speedily enough that Gabinius had brought the Ptolemy back to his country; the news reached us more slowly. We watched for every rumour with the same passionate anxiety as now.

“At that time Cleopatra was fourteen, and had developed magnificently. Yonder portrait shows the perfect flower, but the bud possessed, if possible, even more exquisite charm. How clear and earnest was the gaze of her bright eyes! When

she was gay they could shine like stars, and then her little red mouth had an indescribably mischievous expression, and in each cheek came one of the tiny dimples which still delight every one. Her nose was more delicate than it is now, and the slight curve which appears in the portrait, and which is far too prominent in the coins, was not visible. Her hair did not grow dark until later in life. My sister Charmian had no greater pleasure than to arrange its wavy abundance. It was like silk, she often said, and she was right. I know this, for when at the festival of Isis, Cleopatra, holding the *sistrum*, followed the image of the goddess, she was obliged to wear it unconfined. On her return home she often shook her head merrily, and her hair fell about her like a cataract, veiling her face and figure. Then, as now, she was not above middle height, but her form possessed the most exquisite symmetry, only it was still more delicate and pliant.

“She had understood how to win all hearts. Yet, though she seemed to esteem our father higher, trust me more fully, look up to Anubis with greater reverence, and prefer to argue with the keen-witted Timagenes, she still appeared to hold all who surrounded her in equal favour, while Arsinoë left me in the lurch if Straton were present, and whenever the handsome Melnodor, one of my father's pupils, came to us, she fairly devoured him with her glowing eyes.

“As soon as it was rumoured that the Romans were bringing the King back, Queen Berenike came to us to take the young girls to the city. When Cleopatra entreated her to leave her in our parents’ care and not interrupt her studies, a scornful smile flitted over Berenike’s face, and turning to her husband Archelaus, she said scornfully, ‘I think books will prove to be the smallest danger.’

“Pothinus, the guardian of the two princesses’ brothers, had formerly permitted them at times to visit their sisters. Now they were no longer allowed to leave Lochias, but neither Cleopatra nor Arsinoë made many inquiries about them. The little boys always retreated from their caresses, and the Egyptian locks on their temples, which marked the age of childhood, and the Egyptian garments which Pothinus made them wear, lent them an unfamiliar aspect.

“When it was reported that the Romans were advancing from Gaza, both girls were overpowered by passionate excitement. Arsinoë’s glittered in every glance; Cleopatra understood how to conceal hers, but her colour often varied, and her face, which was not pink and white like her sister’s, but—how shall I express it?—”

“I know what you mean,” Barine interrupted. “When I saw her, nothing seemed to me more charming than that pallid hue through which the crimson of her cheeks shines like the flame through yonder alabaster lamp, the tint of the peach through

the down. I have seen it often in convalescents. Aphrodite breathes this hue on the faces and figures of her favourites only, as the god of time imparts the green tinge to the bronze. Nothing is more beautiful than when such women blush."

"Your sight is keen," replied Archibius, smiling. "It seemed indeed as if not Eos, but her faint reflection in the western horizon, was tinting the sky, when joy or shame sent the colour to her cheeks, But when wrath took possession of her—and ere the King's return this often happened—she could look as if she were lifeless, like a marble statue, with lips as colourless as those of a corpse.

"My father said that the blood of Physkon and other degenerate ancestors, who had not learned to control their passions, was asserting itself in her also. But I must continue my story, or the messenger will interrupt me too soon.

"Gabinus was bringing back the King. But from the time of his approach with the Roman army and the auxiliary troops of the Ethnarch of Judea, nothing more was learned of him or of Antipater, who commanded the forces of Hyrkanus; every one talked constantly of the Roman general Antony. He had led the troops successfully through the deserts between Syria and the Egyptian Delta without losing a single man on the dangerous road by the Sirbonian Sea and Barathra, where many an army had met destruction. Not to Antipater, but to him, had the Jewish garrison

of Pelusium surrendered their city without striking a blow. He had conquered in two battles; and the second, where, as you know, Berenike's husband fell after a brave resistance, had decided the destiny of the country.

"From the time his name was first mentioned, neither of the girls could hear enough about him. It was said that he was the most aristocratic of aristocratic Romans, the most reckless of the daring, the wildest of the riotous, and the handsomest of the handsome.

"The waiting-maid from Mantua, with whom Cleopatra practised speaking the Roman language, had often seen him, and had heard of him still more frequently—for his mode of life was the theme of gossip among all classes of Roman men and women. His house was said to have descended in a direct line from Hercules, and his figure and magnificent black beard recalled his ancestor. You know him, and know that the things reported of him are those which a young girl cannot hear with indifference, and at that time he was nearly five lustra younger than he is to-day.

"How eagerly Arsinoë listened when his name was uttered! How Cleopatra flushed and paled when Timagenes condemned him as an unprincipled libertine! True, Antony was opening her father's path to his home.

"The flute-player had not forgotten his daughters. He had remained aloof from the battle, but

as soon as the victory was decided, he pressed on into the city.

“The road led past our garden.

“The King had barely time to send a runner to his daughters, fifteen minutes before his arrival, to say that he desired to greet them. They were hurriedly attired in festal garments, and both presented an appearance that might well gladden a father’s heart.

“Cleopatra was not yet as tall as Arsinoë, but, though only fourteen, she looked like a full-grown maiden, while her sister’s face and figure showed that in years she was still a child. But she was no longer one in heart. Bouquets for the returning sovereign had been arranged as well as haste permitted. Each one of the girls held one in her hand when the train approached.

“My parents accompanied them to the garden gate. I could see what was passing, but could hear distinctly only the voices of the men.

“The King alighted from the travelling chariot, which was drawn by eight white Median steeds. The chamberlain who attended him was obliged to support him. His face, reddened by his potations, fairly beamed as he greeted his daughters. His joyful surprise at the sight of both, but especially of Cleopatra, was evident. True, he kissed and embraced Arsinoë, but after that he had eyes and ears solely for Cleopatra.

“Yet his younger daughter was very beautiful.

Away from her sister, she would have commanded the utmost admiration ; but Cleopatra was like the sun, beside which every other heavenly body pales. Yet, no ; she should not be compared to the sun. It was part of the fascination she exerted that every one felt compelled to gaze at her, to discover the source of the charm which emanated from her whole person.

“Antony, too, was enthralled by the spell as soon as he heard the first words from her lips. He had dashed up to the King’s chariot, and seeing the two daughters by their father’s side, he greeted them with a hasty salute. When, in reply to the question whether he might hope for her gratitude for bringing her father back to her so quickly, she said that as a daughter she sincerely rejoiced, but as an Egyptian the task would be harder, he gazed more keenly at her.

“I did not know her answer until later ; but ere the last sound of her voice had died away, I saw the Roman spring from his charger and fling the bridle to Ammonius—the chamberlain who had assisted the King from the chariot—as if he were his groom. The woman-hunter had met with rare game in his pursuit of the fairest, and while he continued his conversation with Cleopatra her father sometimes joined in, and his deep laughter was often heard.

“No one would have recognized the earnest disciple of Epicurus. We had often heard apt re-

plies and original thoughts from Cleopatra's lips, but she had rarely answered Timagenes's jests with another. Now she found—one could see it by watching the speakers—a witty answer to many of Antony's remarks. It seemed as if, for the first time, she had met some one for whom she deemed it worth while to bring into the field every gift of her deep and quick intelligence. Yet she did not lose for a moment her womanly dignity; her eyes did not sparkle one whit more brightly than during an animated conversation with me or our father.

“It was very different with Arsinoë. When Antony flung himself from his horse, she had moved nearer to her sister, but, as the Roman continued to overlook her, her face crimsoned, she bit her scarlet lips. Her whole attitude betrayed the agitation that mastered her, and I, who knew her, saw by the expression of her eyes and her quivering nostrils that she was on the point of bursting into tears. Though Cleopatra stood so much nearer to my heart, I felt sorry for her, and longed to touch the arm of the haughty Roman, who indeed looked like the god of war, and whisper to him to take some little notice of the poor child, who was also a daughter of the King.

“But a still harder blow was destined to fall upon Arsinoë; for when the King, who had been holding both bouquets, warned Antony that it was time to depart, he took one, and I heard him say in his deep, loud tones, ‘Whoever calls such

flowers his daughters does not need so many others.' Then he gave Cleopatra the blossoms and, laying his hand upon his heart, expressed the hope of seeing her in Alexandria, and swung himself upon the charger which the chamberlain, pale with fury, was still holding by the bridle.

"The flute-player was delighted with his oldest daughter, and told my father he would have the young princess conveyed to the city on the day after the morrow. The next day he had things to do of which he desired her to have no knowledge. Our father, in token of his gratitude, should retain for himself and his heirs the summer palace and the garden. He would see that the change of owner was entered in the land register. This was really done that very day. It was, indeed, his first act save one—the execution of his daughter Berenike.

"This ruler, who would have seemed to any one who beheld his meeting with his children a warm-hearted man and a tender father, at that time would have put half Alexandria to the sword, had not Antony interposed. He forbade the bloodshed, and honoured Berenike's dead husband by a stately funeral.

"As the steed bore him away, he turned back towards Cleopatra; he could not have saluted Arsinoë, for she had rushed into the garden, and her swollen face betrayed that she had shed burning tears.

"From that hour she bitterly hated Cleopatra.

"On the day appointed, the King brought the princesses to the city with regal splendour. The Alexandrians joyously greeted the royal sisters, as, seated on a golden throne, over which waved ostrich-feathers, they were borne in state down the Street of the King, surrounded by dignitaries, army commanders, the body-guard, and the senate of the city. Cleopatra received the adulation of the populace with gracious majesty, as if she were already Queen. Whoever had seen her as, with floods of tears, she bade us all farewell, assuring us of her gratitude and faithful remembrance, the sisterly affection she showed me—I had just been elected commander of the Ephebi—" Here Archibius was interrupted by a slave, who announced the arrival of the messenger, and, rising hurriedly, he went to Leonax's workshop, to which the man had been conducted, that he might speak to him alone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE men sent by Archibius to obtain news had brought back no definite information; but a short time before, a royal runner had handed him a tablet from Iras, requesting him to visit her the next day. Disquieting, but fortunately as yet unverified tidings had arrived. The Regent was doing everything in his power to ascertain the truth; but he (Archibius) was aware of the distrust of the government, and everything connected with it, felt by the sailors and all the seafaring folk at the harbour. An independent person like himself could often learn more than the chief of the harbour police, with all his ships and men.

The little tablet was accompanied by a second, which, in the Regent's name, authorized the bearer to have the harbour chains raised anywhere, to go out into the open sea and return without interference.

The messenger, the overseer of Archibius's galley slaves, was an experienced man. He undertook to have the "Epicurus"—a swift vessel, which Cleopatra had given to her friend—ready for a

voyage to the open sea within two hours. The carriage should be sent for his master, that no time might be lost.

When Archibius had returned to the ladies and asked whether it would be an abuse of their hospitality, if—it was now nearly midnight—he should still delay his departure for a time, they expressed sincere pleasure, and begged him to continue his narrative.

“I must hasten,” he hurriedly began, after eating the lunch which Berenike had ordered while he was talking with the messenger, “but the events of the next few years are hardly worth mentioning. Besides, my time was wholly occupied by my studies in the museum.

“As for Cleopatra and Arsinoë, they stood like queens at the head of all the magnificence of the court. The day on which they left our house was the last of their childhood.

“Who would venture to determine whether her father’s restoration, or the meeting with Antony, had wrought the great change which took place at that time in Cleopatra?

“Just before she left us, my mother had lamented that she must give her to a father like the flute-player, instead of to a worthy mother; for the best could not help regarding herself happy in the possession of such a daughter. Afterwards her character and conduct were better suited to delight men than to please a mother. The yearn-

ing for peace of mind seemed over. Only the noisy festivals, the singing and music, of which there was never any cessation in the palace of the royal virtuoso, seemed to weary her and at such times she appeared at our house and spent several days beneath its roof. Arsinoë never accompanied her; her heart was sometimes won by a golden-haired officer in the ranks of the German horsemen whom Gabinius had left among the garrison of Alexandria, sometimes by a Macedonian noble among the youths who, at' that time, performed the service of guarding the palace.

"Cleopatra lived apart from her, and Arsinoë openly showed her hostility from the time that she entreated her to put an end to the scandal caused by her love affairs.

"Cleopatra held aloof from such things.

"Though she had devoted much time to the magic arts of the Egyptians, her clear intellect had rendered her so familiar with the philosophy of the Hellenes that it was a pleasure to hear her converse or argue in the museum—as she often did—with the leaders of the various schools. Her self-confidence had become very strong. Though, while with us, she said that she longed to return to the days of the peaceful Garden of Epicurus, she devoted herself eagerly enough to the events occurring in the world and to statecraft. She was familiar with everything in Rome, the desires and struggles of the contending parties, as

well as the characters of the men who were directing affairs, their qualities, views, and aims.

"She followed Antony's career with the interest of love, for she had bestowed on him the first affection of her young heart. She had expected the greatest achievements, but his subsequent course seemed to belie these lofty hopes. A tinge of scorn coloured her remarks concerning him at that time, but here also her heart had its share.

"Pompey, to whom her father owed his restoration to the throne, she considered a lucky man, rather than a great and wise one. Of Julius Cæsar, on the contrary, long before she met him, she spoke with ardent enthusiasm, though she knew that he would gladly have made Egypt a Roman province. The greatest deed which she expected from the energetic Julius was that he would abolish the republic, which she hated, and soar upward to tyrannize over the arrogant rulers of the world—only she would fain have seen Antony in his place. How often in those days she used magic art to assure herself of his future! Her father was interested in these things, especially as, through them, and the power of the mighty Isis, he expected to obtain relief from his many and severe sufferings.

"Cleopatra's brothers were still mere boys, completely dependent upon their guardian, Pothinus, to whom the King left the care of the government, and their tutor, Theodotus, a clever but unprin-

cipled rhetorician. These two men and Achilles, the commander of the troops, would gladly have aided Dionysus, the King's oldest male heir, to obtain the control of the state, in order afterwards to rule him, but the flute-player baffled their plans. You know that in his last will he made Cleopatra, his favourite child, his successor, but her brother Dionysus was to share the throne as her husband. This caused much scandal in Rome, though it was an old custom of the house of Ptolemy, and suited the Egyptians.

"The flute-player died. Cleopatra became Queen, and at the same time the wife of a husband ten years old, for whom she did not even possess the natural gift of sisterly tenderness. But with the obstinate child who had been told by his counsellors that the right to rule should be his alone, she also married the former governors of the country.

"Then began a period of sore suffering. Her life was a perpetual battle against notorious intrigues, the worst of which owed their origin to her sister. Arsinoë had surrounded herself with a court of her own, managed by the eunuch Ganymedes, an experienced commander, and at the same time a shrewd adviser, wholly devoted to her interest. He understood how to bring her into close relations with Pothinus and other rulers of the state, and thus at last united all who possessed any power in the royal palace in an endeavour to

thrust Cleopatra from the throne. Pothinus, Theodotus, and Achilles hated her because she saw their failings and made them feel the superiority of her intellect. Their combined efforts might have succeeded in overthrowing her before, had not the Alexandrians, headed by the Ephebi, over whom I still had some influence, stood by her so steadfastly. Whoever could still be classed as a 'youth' glowed with enthusiasm for her, and most of the Macedonian nobles in the body-guard would have gone to death for her sake, though she had forced them to gaze hopelessly up to her as if she were some unapproachable goddess.

"When her father died she was seventeen, but she knew how to resist oppressors and foes as if she were a man. My sister, Charmian, whom she had appointed to a place in her service, loyally aided her. At that time she was a beautiful and lovable girl, but the spell exerted by the Queen fettered her like chains and bonds. She voluntarily resigned the love of a noble man—he afterwards became your husband, Berenike—in order not to leave her royal friend at a time when she so urgently needed her. Since then my sister has shut her heart against love. It belonged to Cleopatra. She lives, thinks, cares for her alone. She is fond of you, Barine, because your father was so dear to her. Iras, whose name is so often associated with hers, is the daughter of my oldest sister, who was already married when the King entrusted the

princesses to our father's care. She is thirteen years younger than Cleopatra, but her mistress holds the first place in her heart also. Her father, the wealthy Krates, made every effort to keep her from entering the service of the Queen, but in vain. A single conversation with this marvellous woman had bound her forever.

"But I must be brief. You have doubtless heard how completely Cleopatra bewitched Pompey's son during his visit to Alexandria. She had not been so gracious to any man since her meeting with Antony, and it was not from affection, but to maintain the independence of her beloved native land. At that time the father of Gnejus was the man who possessed the most power, and statecraft commanded her to win him through his son. The young Roman also took his leave 'full of her,' as the Egyptians say. This pleased her, but the visit greatly aided her foes. There was no slander which was not disseminated against her. The commanders of the body-guard, whom she had always treated as a haughty Queen, had seen her associate with Pompey's son in the theatre as if he were a friend of equal rank; and on many other occasions the Alexandrians saw her repay his courtesies in the same coin. But in those days hatred of Rome surged high. The regents, leagued with Arsinoë, spread the rumour that Cleopatra would deliver Egypt up to Pompey, if the senate would secure to her the sole sovereignty of the

new province, and leave her free to rid herself of her royal brother and husband.

"She was compelled to fly, and went first to the Syrian frontier, to gain friends for her cause among the Asiatic princes. My brother Straton—you remember the noble youth who won the prize for wrestling at Olympia, Berenike—and I were commissioned to carry the treasure to her. We doubtless exposed ourselves to great peril, but we did so gladly, and left Alexandria with a few camels, an ox-cart, and some trusted slaves. We were to go to Gaza, where Cleopatra was already beginning to collect an army, and had disguised ourselves as Nabatæan merchants. The languages which I had learned, in order not to be distanced by Cleopatra, were now of great service.

"Those were stirring times. The names of Cæsar and Pompey were in every mouth. After the defeat at Dyrrachium the cause of Julius seemed lost, but the Pharsalian battle again placed him uppermost, unless the East rose in behalf of Pompey. Both seemed to be favourites of Fortune. The question now was to which the goddess would prove most faithful.

"My sister Charmian was with the Queen, but through one of Arsinoë's maids, who was devoted to her, we had learned from the palace that Pompey's fate was decided. He had come a fugitive from the defeat of Pharsalus, and begged the King of Egypt—that is, the men who were acting in his

name—for a hospitable reception. Pothinus and his associates had rarely confronted a greater embarrassment. The troops and ships of the victorious Cæsar were close at hand; many of Gabinus' men were serving in the Egyptian army. To receive the vanquished Pompey kindly was to make the victorious Cæsar a foe. I was to witness the terrible solution of this dilemma. The infamous words of Theodotus, 'Dead dogs no longer bite,' had turned the scale.

"My brother and I reached Mount Casius with our precious freight, and pitched our tents to await a messenger, when a large body of armed men approached from the city. At first we feared that we were pursued; but a spy reported that the King himself was among the soldiery, and at the same time a large Roman galley drew near the coast. It must be Pompey's. So they had changed their views, and the King was coming in person to receive their guest. The troops encamped on the flat shore on which stood the Temple of the Casian Amon.

"The September sun shone brightly, and was reflected from the weapons. From the high bank of the dry bed of the river, where we had pitched our tent, we saw something scarlet move to and fro. It was the King's mantle. The waves, stirred by the autumn breeze, rippled lightly, blue as corn-flowers, over the yellow sand of the dunes; but the King stood still, shading his eyes with his

hand as he gazed at the galley. Meanwhile, Achilles, the commander of the troops, and Septimius, the tribune, who belonged to the Roman garrison in Alexandria, and who, I knew, had served under Pompey and owed him many favours, had entered a boat and put off to the vessel, which could not come nearer the land on account of the shallow water.

"The conference now began, and Achilles's offer of hospitality must have been very warm and well calculated to inspire confidence, for a tall lady—it was Cornelia, the wife of the Emperor—waved her hand to him in token of gratitude."

Here the speaker paused, drew a long breath, and, pressing his hand to his brow, continued :

"What follows—alas, that it was my fate to witness the dreadful scene! How often a garbled account has been given, and yet the whole was so terribly simple!

"Fortune makes her favourites confiding. Pompey was also. Though more than fifty years old—he lacked two years of sixty—he sprang into the boat quickly enough, with merely a little assistance from a freedman. A sailor—he was a negro—shoved the skiff off from the side of the huge ship as violently as if the pole he used for the purpose was a spear, and the galley his foe. The boat, urged by his companions' oars, had already moved forward, and he stumbled, the brown cap falling from his woolly head in the act.

It seems as if I could still see him. Ere I clearly realized that this was an evil omen, the boat stopped.

"The water was shallow. I saw Achilles point to the shore. It could be reached by a single bound. Pompey looked towards the King. The freedman put his hand under his arm to help him rise. Septimius also stood up. I thought he intended to assist him. But no! What did this mean? Something flashed by the Emperor's silver-grey hair as if a spark had fallen from the sky. Would Pompey defend himself, or why did he raise his hand? It was to draw around him the toga, with which he silently covered his face. The tribune's arm was again raised high into the air, and then—what confusion! Here, there, yonder, hands suddenly appeared aloft, bright flashes darted through the clear air. Achilles, the general, dealt blows with his dagger as if he were skilled in murder. The Emperor's stalwart figure sank forward. The freedman supported him.

"Then shouts arose, here a cry of fury, yonder a wail of grief, and, rising above all, a woman's shriek of anguish. It came from the lips of Cornelia, the murdered man's wife. Shouts of applause from the King's camp followed, then the blast of a trumpet; the Egyptians drew back from the shore. The scarlet cloak again appeared. Septimius, bearing in his hand a bleeding head, went towards it and held the ghastly trophy aloft.

The royal boy gazed into the dull eyes of the victim, who had guided the destinies of many a battle-field, of Rome, of two quarters of the globe. The sight was probably too terrible for the child upon the throne, for he averted his head. The ship moved away from the land, the Egyptians formed into ranks and marched off. Achilles cleansed his blood-stained hands in the sea-water. The freedman beside him washed his master's headless trunk. The general shrugged his shoulders as the faithful fellow heaped reproaches on him."

Here Archibius paused, drawing a long breath. Then he continued more calmly :

" Achilles did not lead the troops back to Alexandria, but eastward, towards Pelusium, as I learned later.

" My brother and I stood on the rocky edge of the ravine. It was long ere either spoke. A cloud of dust concealed the King and his body-guard, the sails of the galley disappeared. Twilight closed in, and Straton pointed westward towards Alexandria. Then the sun set. Red! red! It seemed as if a torrent of blood was pouring over the city.

" Night followed. A scanty fire was glimmering on the strand. Where had the wood been gathered in this desert? How had it been kindled? A wrecked, mouldering boat had lain close beside the scene of the murder. The freedman and his companions had broken it up and fed the flames

with withered boughs, the torn garments of the murdered man, and dry sea-weed. A blaze soon rose, and a body was carefully placed upon the wretched funeral pyre. It was the corpse of the great Pompey. One of the Imperator's veterans aided the faithful servant."

Here Archibius sank back again among the cushions, adding in explanation :

"Cordus, the man's name was Servius Cordus. He fared well later. The Queen provided for him. The others? Fate overtook them all soon enough. Theodotus was condemned by Brutus to a torturing death. Amid his loud shrieks of agony one of Pompey's veterans shouted, 'Dead dogs no longer bite, but they howl when dying!'

"It was worthy of Cæsar that he averted his face in horror from the head of his enemy, which Theodotus sent to him. Pothinus, too, vainly awaited the reward of his infamous deed.

"Julius Cæsar had cast anchor before Alexandria shortly after the King's return. Not until after his arrival in Egypt did he learn how Pompey had been received there. You know that he remained nine months. How often I have heard it said that Cleopatra understood how to chain him here! This is both true and false. He was obliged to stay half a year; the following three months he did indeed give to the woman whom he loved. Ay, the heart of the man of fifty-four had again opened to a great passion. Like all wounds, those in-

flicted by the arrows of Eros heal more slowly when youth lies behind the stricken one. It was not only the eyes and the senses which attracted a couple so widely separated by years, but far more the mental characteristics of both. Two winged intellects had met. The genius of one had recognized that of the other. The highest type of manhood had met perfect womanhood. They could not fail to attract each other. I expected it; for Cleopatra had long watched breathlessly the flight of this eagle who soared so far above the others, and she was strong enough to keep at his side.

“We succeeded in joining Cleopatra, and heard that, spite of the hostility of our citizens, Cæsar had occupied the palace of the Ptolemies and was engaged in restoring order.

“We knew in what way Pothinus, Achillas, and Arsinoë would seek to influence him. Cleopatra had good reason to fear that her foes might deliver Egypt unconditionally to Rome, if Cæsar should leave the reins of government in their hands and shut her out. She had cause to dread this, but she also had the courage to act in person in her own behalf.

“The point now was to bring her into the city, the palace—nay, into direct communication with the dictator. Children tell the tale of the strong man who bore Cleopatra in a sack through the palace portals. It was not a sack which concealed her, but a Syrian carpet. The strong man

was my brother Straton. I went first, to secure a free passage.

—“Julius Cæsar and she saw and found each other. Fate merely drew the conclusion which must result from such premises. Never have I seen Cleopatra happier, more exalted in mind and heart, yet she was menaced on all sides by serious perils. It required all the military genius of Cæsar to conquer the fierce hostility which he encountered here. It was this, not the thrall of Cleopatra, I repeat, which first bound him to Egypt. What would have prevented him—as he did later—from taking the object of his love to Rome, had it been possible at that time? But this was not the case. The Alexandrians provided for that.

“He had recognized the flute-player’s will, nay, had granted more to the royal house than could have been given to the former. Cleopatra and her brother-husband, Dionysus, were to share the government, and he also bestowed on Arsinoë and her youngest brother the island of Cyprus, which had been wrested from their uncle Ptolemy by the republic. Rome was, of course, to remain the guardian of the brothers and sisters.

“This arrangement was unendurable to Pothinus and the former rulers of the state. Cleopatra as Queen, and Rome—that is Cæsar, the dictator, her friend, as guardian—meant their removal from power, their destruction, and they resisted violently.

“The Egyptians and even the Alexandrians supported them. The young King hated nothing more than the yoke of the unloved sister, who was so greatly his superior. Cæsar had come with a force by no means equal to theirs, and it might be possible to draw the mighty general into a snare. They fought with all the power at their command, with such passionate eagerness, that the dictator had never been nearer succumbing to peril. But Cleopatra certainly did not paralyze his strength and cautious deliberation. No! He had never been greater; never proved the power of his genius so magnificently. And against what superior power, what hatred he contended! I myself saw the young King, when he heard that Cleopatra had succeeded in entering the palace and meeting Cæsar, rush into the street, fairly crazed by rage, tear the diadem from his head, hurl it on the pavement, and shriek to the passers-by that he was betrayed, until Cæsar’s soldiers forced him back into the palace, and dispersed the mob.

“Arsinoë had received more than she could venture to expect; but she was again most deeply angered. After Cæsar’s entry into the palace, she had received him as Queen, and hoped everything from his favour. Then her hated sister had come and, as so often happened, she was forgotten for Cleopatra’s sake.

“This was too much, and with the eunuch

Ganymedes, her confidant, and—as I have already said—an able warrior, she left the palace and joined the dictator's foes.

“There were severe battles on land and sea; in the streets of the city, for the drinkable water excavated by the foe; and against the conflagration which destroyed part of the Bruchium and the library of the museum. Yet, half dead with thirst, barely escaped from drowning, threatened on all sides by fierce hatred, he stood firm, and remained victor also in the open field, after the young King had placed himself at the head of the Egyptians and collected an army.

“You know that the boy was drowned in the flight.

“In battle and mortal peril, amid blood and the clank of arms, Cæsar and Cleopatra spent half a year ere they were permitted to pluck the fruit of their common labour. The dictator now made her Queen of Egypt, and gave her, as co-regent, her youngest brother, a boy not half her own age. To Arsinoë he granted the life she had forfeited, but sent her to Italy.

“Peace followed the victory. Now, it is true, grave duties must have summoned the statesman back to Rome, but he tarried three full months longer.

“Whoever knows the life of the ambitious Julius, and is aware what this delay might have cost him, may well strike his brow with his hand,

and ask, 'Is it true and possible that he used this precious time to take a trip with the woman he loved up the Nile, to the island of Isis, which is so dear to the Queen, to the extreme southern frontier of the country?' Yet it was so, and I myself went in the second ship, and not only saw them together, but more than once shared their banquets and their conversation. It was giving and taking, forcing down and elevating, a succession of discords, not unpleasant to hear, because experience taught that they would finally terminate in the most beautiful harmony. It was a festal day for all the senses."

"I imagine the whole Nile journey," interrupted Barine, "to be like the fairy voyage, when the purple silk sails of Cleopatra's galley bore Antony along the Cydnus."

"No, no," replied Archibius, "she first learned from Antony the art of filling this earthly existence with fleeting pleasures. Cæsar demanded more. Her intellect offered him the highest enjoyment."

Here he hesitated.

"True, the skill with which, to please Antony, she daily offered him for years fresh charms for every sense, was not a matter of accident."

"And this," cried Barine, "this was undertaken by the woman who had recognized the chief good in peace of mind!"

"Ay," replied Archibius thoughtfully, "yet

this was the inevitable result. Pleasure had been the young girl's object in life. Ere passion awoke in her soul, peace of mind was the chief good she knew. When the hour arrived that this proved unattainable, the firmly rooted yearning for happiness still remained the purpose of her existence. My father would have been wiser to take her to the Stoa and impress it upon her that, if life must have a goal, it should be only to live in accordance with the sensibly arranged course of the world, and in harmony with one's own nature. He should have taught her to derive happiness from virtue. He should have stamped goodness upon the soul of the future Queen as the fundamental law of her being. He omitted to do this, because in his secluded life he had succeeded in finding the happiness which the master promises to his disciples. From Athens to Cyrene, from Epicurus to Aristippus, is but a short step, and Cleopatra took it when she forgot that the master was far from recognizing the chief good in the enjoyment of individual pleasure. The happiness of Epicurus was not inferior to that of Zeus, if he had only barley bread and water to appease his hunger and thirst.

"Yet she still considered herself a follower of Epicurus, and later, when Antony had gone to the Parthian war, and she was a long time alone, she once more began to strive for freedom from pain and peace of mind, but the state, her children, the

marriage of Antony—who had long been her lover—to Octavia, the yearning of her own heart, Anubis, magic, and the Egyptian teachings of the life after death, above all, the burning ambition, the unresting desire to be loved, where she herself loved, to be first among the foremost——”

Here he was interrupted by the messenger, who informed him that the ship was ready.

CHAPTER VII.

ARCHIBIUS had buried himself so deeply in the past that it was several minutes ere he could bring himself back to the present. When he did so, he hastily discussed with the two ladies the date of their departure.

It was hard for Berenike to leave her injured brother, and Barine longed to see Dion once more before the journey. Both were reluctant to quit Alexandria ere decisive news had arrived from the army and the fleet. So they requested a few days' delay; but Archibius cut them short, requiring them, with a resolution which transformed the amiable friend into a stern master, to be ready for the journey the next day at sunset. His Nile boat would await them at the Agathodæmon harbour on Lake Mareotis, and his travelling chariot would convey them thither, with as much luggage and as many female slaves as they desired to take with them. Then softening his tone, he briefly reminded the ladies of the great annoyances to which a longer stay would expose them, excused his rigour on the plea of haste, pressed the hands of

the mother and daughter, and retired without heeding Barine, who called after him, yet could desire nothing save to plead for a longer delay. The carriage bore him swiftly to the great harbour.

The waxing moon was mirrored like a silver column, now wavering and tremulous, now rent by the waves tossing under a strong southeast wind, and illumined the warm autumn night. The sea outside was evidently running high. This was apparent by the motion of the vessels lying at anchor in the angle which the shore in front of the superb Temple of Poseidon formed with the Choma. This was a tongue of land stretched like a finger into the sea, on whose point stood a little palace which Cleopatra, incited by a chance remark of Antony, had had built there to surprise him.

Another, of white marble, glimmered in the moonlight from the island of Antirrhodus; and farther still a blazing fire illumined the darkness. Its flames flared from the top of the famous lighthouse on the island of Pharos at the entrance of the harbour, and, swayed to and fro by the wind, steeped the horizon and the outer edge of the dark water in the harbour with moving masses of light which irradiated the gloomy distance, sometimes faintly, anon more brilliantly.

Spite of the late hour, the harbour was full of bustle, though the wind often blew the men's cloaks over their heads, and the women were obliged to gather their garments closely around

them. True, at this hour commerce had ceased; but many had gone to the port in search of news, or even to greet before others the first ship returning from the victorious fleet; for that Antony had defeated Octavianus in a great battle was deemed certain.

Guards were watching the harbour, and a band of Syrian horsemen had just passed from the barracks in the southern part of the Lochias to the Temple of Poseidon.

Here the galleys lay at anchor, not in the harbour of Eunostus, which was separated from the other by the broad, bridge-like dam of the Heptastadium, that united the city and the island of Pharos. Near it were the royal palaces and the arsenal, and any tidings must first reach this spot. The other harbour was devoted to commerce, but, in order to prevent the spread of false reports, newly arrived ships were forbidden to enter.

True, even at the great harbour, news could scarcely be expected, for a chain stretching from the end of the Pharos to a cliff directly opposite in the Alveus Steganus, closed the narrow opening. But it could be raised if a state galley arrived with an important message, and this was expected by the throng on the shore.

Doubtless many came from banquets, cook-shops, taverns, or the nocturnal meeting-places of the sects that practised the magic arts, yet the weight of anxious expectation seemed to check

the joyous activity, and wherever Archibius glanced he beheld eager, troubled faces. The wind forced many to bow their heads, and, wherever they turned their eyes, flags and clouds of dust were fluttering in the air, increasing the confusion.

As the galley put off from the shore, and the flutes summoned the oarsmen to their toil, its owner felt so disheartened that he did not even venture to hope that he was going in quest of good tidings.

Long-vanished days had, as it were, been called from the grave, and many a scene from the past rose before him as he lay among the cushions on the poop, gazing at the sky, across which dark, swiftly sailing clouds sometimes veiled the stars and again revealed them.

"How much we can conceal by words without being guilty of falsehood!" he murmured, while recalling what he had told the women.

Ay, he had been Cleopatra's confidant in his early youth, but how he had loved her, how, even as a boy, he had been subject to her, body and soul! He had allowed her to see it, displayed, confessed it; and she had accepted it as her rightful due. She had repelled with angry pride his only attempt to clasp her, in his overflowing affection, in his arms; but to show his love for her is a crime for which the loftiest woman pardons the humblest suitor, and a few hours later Cleopatra had met him with the old affectionate familiarity.

Again he recalled the torments which he had endured when compelled to witness how completely she yielded to the passion which drew her to Antony. At that time the Roman had merely swept through her life like a swiftly passing meteor, but many things betrayed that she did not forget him; and while Archibius had seen without pain her love for the great Cæsar bud and grow, the torturing feeling of jealousy again stirred in his heart, though youth was past, when at Tarsus, on the river Cydnus, she renewed the bond which still united her to Antony.

Now his hair had grown grey, and though nothing had clouded his friendship for the Queen, though he had always been ready to serve her, this foolish feeling had not been banished, and again and again mastered his whole being. He by no means undervalued Antony's attractions; but he saw his foibles no less clearly. All in all, whenever he thought of this pair, he felt like the lover of art who entrusts the finest gem in his collection to a rich man who knows not how to prize its real value, and puts it in the wrong place.

Yet he wished the Roman the most brilliant victory; for his defeat would have been Cleopatra's also, and would she endure the consequences of such a disaster?

The galley was approaching the flickering circle of light at the foot of the Pharos, and Archibius was just producing the token which was to secure

the lifting of the chain, when his name echoed through the stillness of the night.

It was Dion hailing him from a boat tossing near the mouth of the harbour on the waves surging in from the turbulent sea. He had recognized Archibius's swift galley from the bust of Epicurus which was illumined by the light of the lantern in the prow. Cleopatra had had it placed upon the ship which, by her orders, had been built for her friend.

Dion now desired to join him, and was soon standing on the deck at his side. He had landed on the island of Pharos, and entered a sailors' tavern to learn what was passing. But no one could give him any definite information, for the wind was blowing from the land and allowed large vessels to approach the Egyptian coast only by the aid of oars. Shortly before the breeze had veered from south to southeast, and an experienced Rhodian would "never again lift cup of wine to his lips" if it did not blow from the north to-morrow or the day after. Then ships bearing news might reach Alexandria by the dozen—that is, the greybeard added with a defiant glance at the daintily clad city gentleman—if they were allowed to pass the Pharos or go through the Poseidon basin into the Eunostus. He had fancied that he saw sails on the horizon at sunset, but the swiftest galley became a hedgehog when the wind blew against its prow, and even checked the oars.

Others, too, had fancied that they had seen sails, and Dion would gladly have gone out to sea to investigate, but he was entirely alone in a frail hired boat, and this would not have been permitted to pass beyond the harbour. The expectation that every road would be open to Archibius had not deceived him, and the harbour chain was drawn aside for the Epicurus. With swelling sails, urged by the strong wind blowing from the south-east, its keel cut the rolling waves.

Soon a faint, tremulous light appeared in the north. It must be a ship; and though the helmsman in the tavern at Pharos, who looked as though he had not always steered peaceful trading-vessels, had spoken of some which did not let the ships they caught pass unscathed, the men on the well-equipped, stately Epicurus did not fear pirates, especially as morning was close at hand, and it had just shot by two clumsy men-of-war which had been sent out by the Regent.

The strong wind filled every sail, rowing would have been useless labour, and the light in front seemed to be coming nearer.

A wan glimmer was already beginning to brighten the distant east when the Epicurus approached the vessel with the light, but it seemed to wish to avoid the Alexandrian, and turned suddenly towards the northeast.

Archibius and Dion now discussed whether it would be worth while to pursue the fugitive. It

was a small ship, which, as the dark masses of clouds became bordered with golden edges, grew more distinct and appeared to be a Cilician pirate of the smallest size.

As to its crew, the tried sailors on the Epicurus, a much larger vessel, which lacked no means of defence, showed no signs of alarm, the helmsman especially, who had served in the fleet of Sextus Pompey, and had sprung upon the deck of many a pirate ship.

Archibius deemed it foolish to commence a conflict unnecessarily. But Dion was in the mood to brave every peril.

If life and death were at stake, so much the better!

He had informed his friend of Iras's fears.

The fleet must be in a critical situation, and if the little Cilician had had nothing to conceal she would not have shunned the Epicurus.

It was worth while to learn what had induced her to turn back just before reaching the harbour.

The warlike helmsman also desired to give chase, and Archibius yielded, for the uncertainty was becoming more and more unbearable. Dion's soul was deeply burdened too. He could not banish Barine's image; and since Archibius had told him that he had found her resolved to shut her house against guests, and how willingly she had accepted his invitation to the country, again and again he pondered over the question what should

prevent his marrying the quiet daughter of a distinguished artist, whom he loved ?

Archibius had remarked that Barine would be glad to greet her most intimate friends—among whom he was included—in her quiet country home.

Dion did not doubt this, but he was equally sure that the greeting would bind him to her and rob him of his liberty, perhaps forever. But would the Alexandrian possess the lofty gift of freedom, if the Romans ruled his city as they governed Carthage or Corinth ? If Cleopatra were defeated, and Egypt became a Roman province, a share in the business of the council, which was still addressed as “Macedonian men,” and which was dear to Dion, could offer nothing but humiliation, and no longer afford satisfaction.

If a pirate’s spear put an end to bondage under the Roman yoke and to this unworthy yearning and wavering, so much the better !

On this autumn morning, under this grey sky, from which sank a damp, light fog, with these hopes and fears in his heart, he beheld in both the present and future naught save shadows.

The Epicurus overtook and captured the fugitive. The slight resistance the vessel might have offered was relinquished when Archibius’s helmsman shouted that the Epicurus did not belong to the royal navy, and had come in search of news.

The Cilician took in his oars; Archibius and Dion entered the vessel and questioned the commander.

He was an old, weather-beaten seaman, who would give no information until after he had learned what his pursuers really desired.

At first he protested that he had witnessed on the Peloponnesian coast a great victory gained by the Egyptian galleys over those commanded by Octavianus; but the queries of the two friends involved him in contradictions, and he then pretended to know nothing, and to have spoken of a victory merely to please the Alexandrian gentlemen.

Dion, accompanied by a few men from the crew of the *Epicurus*, searched the ship, and found in the little cabin a man bound and gagged, guarded by one of the pirates.

It was a sailor from the Pontus, who spoke only his native language. Nothing intelligible could be obtained from him; but there were important suggestions in a letter, found in a chest in the cabin, among clothing, jewels, and other stolen articles.

The letter—Dion could scarcely believe his own eyes—was addressed to his friend, the architect Gorgias. The pirate, being ignorant of writing, had not opened it, but Dion tore the wax from the cord without delay. Aristocrates, the Greek rhetorician, who had accompanied Antony

to the war, had written from Tænarum, in the south of the Peloponnesus, requesting the architect, in the general's name, to set the little palace at the end of the Choma in order, and surround it on the land side with a high wall.

No door would be necessary. Communication with the dwelling could be had by water. He must do his utmost to complete the work speedily.

The friends gazed at each other in astonishment, as they read this commission.

What could induce Antony to give so strange an order? How did it fall into the hands of the pirates?

This must be understood.

When Archibius, whose gentle nature, so well adapted to inspire confidence, quickly won friends, burst into passionate excitement, the unexpected transition rarely failed to produce its effect, especially as his tall, strong figure and marked features made a still more threatening impression.

Even the captain gazed at him with fear, when the Alexandrian threatened to recall all his promises of consideration and mercy if the pirate withheld even the smallest trifle connected with this letter. The man speedily perceived that it would be useless to make false statements; for the captive from Pontus, though unable to speak Greek, understood the language, and either confirmed every remark of the other with vehement gestures, or branded it in the same manner as false.

Thus it was discovered that the pirate craft, in company with a much larger vessel, owned by a companion, had lurked behind the promontory of Crete for a prize. They had neither seen nor heard aught concerning the two fleets, when a dainty galley, "the finest and fleetest that ever sailed in the sea"—it was probably the "Swallow," Antony's despatch-boat—had run into the snare. To capture her was an easy task. The pirates had divided their booty, but the lion's share of goods and men had fallen to the larger ship.

A pouch containing letters and money had been taken from a gentleman of aristocratic appearance—probably Antony's messenger—who had received a severe wound, died, and had been flung into the sea. The former had been used to light the fire, and only the one addressed to the architect remained.

The captured sailors had said that the fleet of Octavianus had defeated Cleopatra's, and the Queen had fled, but that the land forces were still untouched, and might yet decide the conflict in Antony's favour. The pirate protested that he did not know the position of the army—it might be at Tænarum, whence the captured ship came. It was a sin and a shame, but his own crew had set it on fire, and it sank before his eyes.

This report seemed to be true, yet the Acharnian coast, where the battle was said to have been fought, was so far from the southern point of

the Peloponnesus, whence Antony's letter came, that it must have been written during the flight.

One thing appeared to be certain—the fleet had been vanquished and dispersed on the 2d or 3d of September.

Where would the Queen go now? What had become of the magnificent galleys which had accompanied her to the battle?

Even the contrary winds would not have detained them so long, for they were abundantly supplied with rowers.

Had Octavianus taken possession of them?

Were they burned or sunk?

But in that case how had Antony reached Tænarum?

The pirate could give no answer to these questions, which stirred both heart and brain. Why should he conceal what had reached his ears?

At last Archibius ordered the property stolen from Antony's ship, and the liberated sailor to be brought on board the Epicurus, but the pirate was obliged to swear not to remain in the waters between Crete and Alexandria. Then he was suffered to pursue his way unmolested.

This adventure had occupied many hours, and the return against the wind was slow; for, during the chase the Epicurus had been carried by the strong breeze far out to sea. Yet, when still several miles from the mouth of the harbour at the Pharos, it was evident that the Rhodian helms-

man in the island tavern had predicted truly ; for the weather changed with unusual speed, and the wind now blew from the north. The sea fairly swarmed with ships, some belonging to the royal fleet, some to curious Alexandrians, who had sailed out to take a survey. Archibius and Dion had spent a sleepless night and day. The heavy air, pervaded by a fine mist, had grown cool. After refreshing themselves by a repast, they paced up and down the deck of the Epicurus.

Few words were exchanged, and they wrapped their cloaks closer around them. Both had quaffed large draughts of the fiery wine with which the Epicurus was well supplied, but it would not warm them. Even the fire, blazing brightly in the richly furnished cabin, could scarcely do so.

Archibius's thoughts lingered with his beloved Queen, and his vivid power of imagination conjured before his mind everything which could distress her. No possible chance, not even the most terrible, was forgotten, and when he saw her sinking in the ship, stretching her beautiful arms imploringly towards him, to whom she had so long turned in every perilous position, when he beheld her a captive in the presence of the hostile, cold-hearted Octavianus, the blood seemed to freeze in his veins. At last he dropped his felt mantle and, groaning aloud, struck his brow with his clenched hand. He had fancied her walking with gold chains on her slender wrists before the victor's

four-horse chariot, and heard the exulting shouts of the Roman populace.

That would have been the most terrible of all.

To pursue this train of thought was beyond the endurance of the faithful friend, and Dion turned in surprise as he heard him sob and saw the tears which bedewed his face.

His own heart was heavy enough, but he knew his companion's warm devotion to the Queen; so, passing his arm around his shoulder, he entreated him to maintain that peace of soul and mind which he had so often admired. In the most critical situations he had seen him stand high above them, as yonder man who fed the flames on the summit of the Pharos stood above the wild surges of the sea. If he would reflect over what had happened as dispassionately as usual, he could not fail to see that Antony must be free and in a position to guide his own future, since he directed the palace in the Choma to be put in order. He did not understand about the wall, but perhaps he was bringing home some distinguished captive whom he wished to debar from all communication with the city. It might prove that everything was far better than they feared, and they would yet smile at these grievous anxieties. His heart, too, was heavy, for he wished the Queen the best fortune, not only for her own sake, but because with her and her successful resistance to the greed of Rome was connected the liberty of Alexandria.

"My love and anxiety, like yours," he concluded, "have ever been given to her, the sovereign of this country. The world will be desolate, life will no longer be worth living, if the iron foot of Rome crushes our independence and freedom."

The words had sounded cordial and sincere, and Archibius followed Dion's counsel. Calm thought convinced him that nothing had yet happened which compelled belief in the worst result; and, as one who needs consolation often finds relief in comforting another, Archibius cheered his own heart by representing to his younger friend that, even if Octavianus were the victor and should deprive Egypt of her independence, he would scarcely venture to take from the citizens of Alexandria the free control of their own affairs. Then he explained to Dion that, as a young, resolute, independent man, he might render himself doubly useful if it were necessary to guard the endangered liberty of the city, and told him how many beautiful things life still held in store.

His voice expressed anxious tenderness for his young friend. No one had spoken thus to Dion since his father's death.

The Epicurus would soon reach the mouth of the harbour, and after landing he must again leave Archibius.

The decisive hour which often unites earnest men more firmly than many previous years had come to both. They had opened their hearts to

each other. Dion had withheld only the one thing which, at the first sight of the houses in the city, filled his soul with fresh uneasiness.

It was long since he had sought counsel from others. Many who had asked his, had left him with thanks, to do exactly the opposite of what he had advised, though it would have been to their advantage. More than once he, too, had done the same, but now a powerful impulse urged him to confide in Archibius. He knew Barine, and wished her the greatest happiness. Perhaps it would be wise to let another person, who was kindly disposed, consider what his own heart so eagerly demanded and prudence forbade.

Hastily forming his resolution, he again turned to his friend, saying :

"You have shown yourself a father to me. Imagine that I am indeed your son, and, as such wished to confess that a woman had become dear to my heart, and to ask whether you would be glad to greet her as a daughter."

Here Archibius interrupted him with the exclamation : "A ray of light amid all this gloom? Grasp what you have too long neglected as soon as possible! It befits a good citizen to marry. The Greek does not attain full manhood till he becomes husband and father. If I have remained unwedded, there was a special reason for it, and how often I have envied the cobbler whom I saw standing before his shop in the evening, holding

his child in his arms, or the pilot, to whom large and small hands were stretched in greeting when he returned home! When I enter my dwelling only my dogs rejoice. But you, whose beautiful palace stands empty, to whose proud family it is due that you should provide for its continuance——”

“That is just what brings me into a state of indecision, which is usually foreign to my nature,” interrupted Dion. “You know me and my position in the world, and you have also known from her earliest childhood the woman to whom I allude.”

“Iras?” asked his companion, hesitatingly. His sister, Charmian, had told him of the love felt by the Queen’s younger waiting-woman.

But Dion eagerly denied this, adding: “I am speaking of Barine, the daughter of your dead friend Leonax. I love her, yet my pride is sensitive, and I know that it will extend to my future wife. The contemptuous glances which others might cast at her I should scorn, for I know her worth. Surely you remember my mother: she was a very different woman. Her house, her child, the slaves, her loom, were everything to her. She rigidly exacted from other women the chaste reserve which was a marked trait in her own character. Yet she was gentle, and loved me, her only son, beyond aught else. I think she would have opened her arms to Barine, had she believed that she was

necessary to my happiness. But would the young beauty, accustomed to gay intercourse with distinguished men, have been able to submit to her demands? When I consider that she cannot help taking into her married life the habit of being surrounded and courted; when I think that the imprudence of a woman accustomed to perfect freedom might set idle tongues in motion, and cast a shadow upon the radiant purity of my name; when I even—" and he raised his clenched right hand. But Archibius answered soothingly :

"That anxiety is groundless if Barine warmly and joyfully gives you her whole heart. It is a sunny, lovable, true woman's heart, and therefore capable of a great love. If she bestows it on you—and I believe she will—go and offer sacrifices in your gratitude; for the immortals desired your happiness when they guided your choice to her and not to Iras, my own sister's child. If you were really my son, I would now exclaim, 'You could not bring me a dearer daughter, if—I repeat it—if you are sure of her love.' "

Dion gazed into vacancy a short time, and then cried firmly :

"I am!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Epicurus anchored before the Temple of Poseidon. The crew had been ordered to keep silence, though they knew nothing, except that a letter from Antony, commanding the erection of a wall, had been found on board the pirate. This might be regarded as a good omen, for people do not think of building unless they anticipate a time of peace.

The light rain had ceased, but the wind blew more strongly from the north, and the air had grown cool. A dense throng still covered the quay from the southern end of the Heptastadium to the promontory of Lochias. The strongest pressure was between the peninsula of the Choma and the Sebasteum; for this afforded a view of the sea, and the first tidings must reach the residence of the Regent, which was connected with the palace.

A hundred contradictory rumours had been in circulation that morning; and when, at the third hour in the afternoon, the Epicurus arrived, it was surrounded by a dense multitude eager to hear what news the ship had brought from without.

Other vessels shared the same fate, but none could give reliable tidings.

Two swift galleys from the royal fleet reported meeting a Samian trireme, which had given news of a great victory gained by Antony on the land and Cleopatra on the sea, and, as men are most ready to believe what they desire, throngs of exulting men and women moved to and fro along the shore, strengthening by their confidence many a timorous spirit. Prudent people, who had regarded the long delay of the first ships of the fleet with anxiety, had opened their ears to the tales of evil, and looked forward to the future with uneasiness. But they avoided giving expression to their fears, for the overseer of an establishment for gold embroidery, who had ventured to warn the people against premature rejoicing, had limped home badly beaten, and two other pessimists who had been flung in the sea had just been dragged out dripping wet.

Nor could the multitude be blamed for this confidence; for at the Serapeum, the theatre of Dionysus, the lofty pylons of the Sebasteum, the main door of the museum, in front of the entrance of the palace in the Bruchium, and before the fortress-like palaces in the Lochias, triumphal arches had been erected, adorned with gods of victory and trophies hastily constructed of plaster, inscriptions of congratulations and thanks to the deities, garlands of foliage and flowers. The wreathing of the Egyptian pylons and obelisks, the principal

temple, and the favourite statues in the city had been commenced during the night. The last touches were now being given to the work.

Gorgias, like his friend Dion, had not closed his eyes since the night before; for he had had charge of all the decorations of the Bruchium, where one superb building adjoined another.

Sleep had also fled from the couches of the occupants of the Sebasteum, the royal palace where Iras lived during the absence of the Queen, and the prætorium, facing its southern front, which contained the official residence of the Regent.

When Archibius was conducted to the Queen's waiting-woman, her appearance fairly startled him. She had been his guest in Kanopus only the day before yesterday, and how great was the alteration within this brief time! Her oval face seemed to have lengthened, the features to have grown sharper; and this woman of seven-and-twenty years, who had hitherto retained all the charms of youth, appeared suddenly to have aged a decade. There was a feverish excitement in her manner, as, holding out her hand to her uncle, in greeting, she exclaimed hastily, "You, too, bring no good tidings?"

"Nor any evil ones," he answered quietly. "But, child, I do not like your appearance—the dark circles under your keen eyes. You have had news which rouses your anxiety?"

"Worse than that," she answered in a low tone.

“Well?”

“Read!” gasped Iras, her lips and nostrils quivering as she handed Archibius a small tablet.

With a gesture of haste very unusual in him, he snatched it from her hand and, as his eyes ran over the words traced upon it, every vestige of colour vanished from his cheeks and lips.

They were written by Cleopatra’s own hand, and contained the following lines:

“The naval battle was lost—and by my fault. The land forces might still save us, but not under his command. He is with me, uninjured, but apparently exhausted; like a different being, bereft of courage, listless as if utterly crushed. I foresee the beginning of the end. As soon as this reaches you, arrange to have some unpretending litters ready for us every evening at sunset. Make the people believe that we have conquered until trustworthy intelligence arrives concerning the fate of Canidius and the army. When you kiss the children in my name, be very tender with them. Who knows how soon they may be orphaned? They already have an unhappy mother; may they be spared the memory of a cowardly one! Trust no one except those whom I left in authority, and Archibius, not even Cæsarion or Antyllus. Provide for having every one whose aid may be valuable to me within reach when I come. I cannot close with the familiar ‘Rejoice’—the ‘Fresh Courage’* placed

* “Rejoice” and “Fresh Courage” may be read on many tombs.

on many a tombstone seems more appropriate. You who did not envy me in my happiness will help me to bear misfortune. Epicurus, who believes that the gods merely watch the destiny of men inactively from their blissful heights, is right. Were it otherwise, how could the love and loyalty which cleave to the hapless, defeated woman, be repaid with anguish of heart and tears? Yet—continue to love her.”

Archibius, pale and silent, let the tablet fall. It was long ere he gasped hoarsely: “I foresaw it; yet now that it is here—” His voice failed, and violent, tearless sobs shook his powerful frame.

Sinking on a couch he buried his face amid the cushions.

Iras gazed at the strong man and shook her head.

She, too, loved the Queen; the news had brought tears to her eyes also; but even while she wept, a host of plans coping with this disaster had darted through her restless brain. A few minutes after the arrival of the message of misfortune she had consulted with the members of Cleopatra’s council, and adopted measures for sustaining the people’s belief in the naval victory.

What was she, the delicate, by no means courageous girl, compared to this man of iron strength who, she was well aware, had braved the greatest perils in the service of the Queen? Yet there he lay with his face hidden in the pillows as if utterly overwhelmed.

Did a woman's soul rebound more quickly after being crushed- beneath the burdens of the heaviest suffering, or was hers of a special character, and her slender body the casket of a hero's nature?

She had reason to believe so when she recalled how the Regent and the Keeper of the Seal had received the terrible news. They had rushed frantically up and down the vast hall as if desperate; but Mardion the eunuch had little manhood, and Zeno was a characterless old author who had won the Queen's esteem, and the high office which he occupied solely by the vivid power of imagination, that enabled him constantly to devise new exhibitions, amusements, and entertainments, and present them with magical splendour.

But Archibius, the brave, circumspect counselor and helper?

His shoulders again quivered as if they had received a blow, and Iras suddenly remembered what she had long known, but never fully realized—that yonder grey-haired man loved Cleopatra, loved her as she herself loved Dion; and she wondered whether she would have been strong enough to maintain her composure if she had learned that a cruel fate threatened to rob him of life, liberty, and honour.

Hour after hour she had vainly awaited the young Alexandrian, yet he had witnessed her anxiety the day before. Had she offended him? Was

he detained by the spell of Didymus's beautiful granddaughter?

It seemed a great wrong that, amid the unspeakably terrible misfortune which had overtaken her mistress, she could not refrain from thinking continually of Dion. Even as his image filled her heart, Cleopatra's ruled her uncle's mind and soul, and she said to herself that it was not alone among women that love paid no heed to years, or whether the locks were brown or tinged with grey.

But Archibius now raised himself, left the couch, passed his hand across his brow, and in the deep, calm tones natural to his voice, began with a sorrowful smile: "A man stricken by an arrow leaves the fray to have his wound bandaged. The surgeon has now finished his task. I ought to have spared you this pitiable spectacle, child. But I am again ready for the battle. Cleopatra's account of Antony's condition renders a piece of news which we have just received somewhat more intelligible."

"We?" replied Iras. "Who was your companion?"

"Dion," answered Archibius; but when he was about to describe the incidents of the preceding night, she interrupted him with the question whether Barine had consented to leave the city. He assented with a curt "Yes," but Iras assumed the manner of having expected nothing different, and requested him to continue his story.

Archibius now related everything which they had experienced, and their discovery in the pirate ship. Dion was even now on the way to carry Antony's order to his friend Gorgias.

"Any slave might have attended to that matter equally well," Iras remarked in an irritated tone. "I should think he would have more reason to expect trustworthy tidings here. But that's the way with men!"

Here she hesitated but, meeting an inquiring glance from her uncle, she went on eagerly; "Nothing, I believe, binds them more firmly to one another than mutual pleasure. But that must now be over. They will seek other amusements, whether with Heliodora or Thais I care not. If the woman had only gone before! When she caught young Cæsarion——"

"Stay, child," her uncle interrupted reprovingly. "I know how much she would rejoice if Antyllus had never brought the boy to her house."

"Now—because the poor deluded lad's infatuation alarms her."

"No, from his first visit. Immature boys do not suit the distinguished men whom she receives."

"If the door is always kept open, thieves will enter the house."

"She received only old acquaintances, and the friends whom they presented. Her house was closed to all others. So there was no trouble with

thieves. But who in Alexandria could venture to refuse admittance to a son of the Queen?"

"There is a wide difference between quiet admittance and fanning a passion to madness. Wherever a fire is burning, there has certainly been a spark to kindle it. You men do not detect such women's work. A glance, a pressure of the hand, even the light touch of a garment, and the flame blazes, where such inflammable material lies ready."

"We lament the violence of the conflagration. You are not well disposed towards Barine."

"I care no more for her than this couch here cares for the statue of Mercury in the street!" exclaimed Iras, with repellent arrogance. "There could be no two things in the world more utterly alien than we. Between the woman whose door stands open, and me, there is nothing in common save our sex."

"And," replied Archibius reprovingly, "many a beautiful gift which the gods bestowed upon her as well as upon you. As for the open door, it was closed yesterday. The thieves of whom you spoke spoiled her pleasure in granting hospitality. Antyllus forced himself with noisy impetuosity into her house. This made her dread still more unprecedented conduct in the future. In a few hours she will be on the way to Irenia. I am glad for Cæsarion's sake, and still more for his mother's, whom we have wronged by forgetting so long for another."

"To think that we should be forced to do so!"

cried Iras excitedly—"now, at this hour, when every drop of blood, every thought of this poor brain should belong to the Queen! Yet it could not be avoided. Cleopatra is returning to us with a heart bleeding from a hundred wounds, and it is terrible to think that a new arrow must strike her as soon as she steps upon her native soil. You know how she loves the boy, who is the living image of the great man with whom she shared the highest joys of love. When she learns that he, the son of Cæsar, has given his young heart to the cast-off wife of a street orator, a woman whose home attracted men as ripe dates lure birds, it will be—I know—like rubbing salt into her fresh wounds. Alas! and the *one* sorrow will not be all. Antony, her husband, also found the way to Barine. He sought her more than once. You cannot know it as I do; but Charmian will tell you how sensitive she has become since the flower of her youthful charms—you don't perceive it—is losing one leaf after another. Jealousy will torture her, and—I know her well—perhaps no one will ever render the siren a greater service than I did when I compelled her to leave the city."

The eyes of Archibius's clever niece had glittered with such hostile feeling as she spoke that he thought with just anxiety of his dead friend's daughter. What did not yet threaten Barine as serious danger Iras had the power to transform into grave peril.

Dion had begged him to maintain strict secrecy ; but even had he been permitted to speak, he would not have done so now. From his knowledge of Iras's character she might be expected, if she learned that some one had come between her and the friend of her youth, to shrink from no means of spoiling her game. He remembered the noble Macedonian maiden whom the Queen had begun to favour, and who was hunted to death by Iras's hostile intrigues. Few were more clever, and—if she once loved—more loyal and devoted, more yielding, pliant, and in happy hours more bewitching, yet even in childhood she had preferred a winding path to a straight one. It seemed as if her shrewdness scorned to attain the end desired by the simple method lying close at hand. How willingly his mother and his younger sister Charmian had cared for the slaves and nursed them when they were ill ; nay, Charmian had gained in her Nubian maid Aniukis a friend who would have gone to death for her sake ! Cleopatra, too, when a child, had found sincere delight in taking a bouquet to his parents' sick old housekeeper and sitting by her bedside to shorten the time for her with merry talk. She had gone to her unasked, while Iras had often been punished because she had made the lives of numerous slaves in her parents' household still harder by unreasonable harshness. This trait in her character had roused her uncle's anxiety and, in after-years, her treat-

ment of her inferiors had been such that he could not number her among the excellent of her sex. Therefore he was the more joyfully surprised by the loyal, unselfish love with which she devoted herself to the service of the Queen. Cleopatra had gratified Charmian's wish to have her niece for an assistant; and Iras, who had never been a loving daughter to her own faithful mother, had served her royal mistress with the utmost tenderness.

Archibius valued this loyalty highly, but he knew what awaited any one who became the object of her hatred, and the fear that it would involve Barine in urgent peril was added to his still greater anxiety for Cleopatra.

When about to depart, burdened by the sorrowful conviction that he was powerless against his niece's malevolent purpose, he was detained by the representation that every fresh piece of intelligence would first reach the Sebasteum and her. Some question might easily arise which his calm, prudent mind could decide far better than hers, whose troubled condition resembled a shallow pool disturbed by stones flung into the waves.

The apartments of his sister Charmian, which were connected with his by a corridor, were empty, and Iras begged him to remain there a short time. The anxiety and dread that oppressed her heart would kill her. To know that he was near would be the greatest comfort.

When Archibius hesitated because he deemed it

his duty to urge Cæsarion, over whom he possessed some influence, to give up his foolish wishes for his mother's sake, Iras assured him that he would not find the youth. He had gone hunting with Antyllus and some other friends. She had approved the plan, because it removed him from the city and Barine's dangerous house.

"As the Queen does not wish him to know the terrible news yet," she concluded, "his presence would only have caused us embarrassment. So stay, and when it grows dark go with us to the Lochias. I think it will please the sorrowing woman, when she lands, to see your familiar face, which will remind her of happier days. Do me the favour to stay." She held out both hands beseechingly as she spoke, and Archibius consented.

A repast was served, and he shared it with his niece; but Iras did not touch the carefully chosen viands, and Archibius barely tasted them. Then, without waiting for dessert, he rose to go to his sister's apartments. But Iras urged him to rest on the divan in the adjoining room, and he yielded. Yet, spite of the softness of the pillows and his great need of sleep, he could not find it; anxiety kept him awake, and through the curtain which divided the room in which Iras remained from the one he occupied he sometimes heard her light footsteps pacing restlessly to and fro, sometimes the coming and going of messengers in quest of news.

All his former life passed before his mind. Cleopatra had been his sun, and now black clouds were rising which would dim its light, perchance forever. He, the disciple of Epicurus, who had not followed the doctrines of other masters until later in life, held the same view of the gods as his first master. To him also they had seemed immortal beings sufficient unto themselves, dwelling free from anxiety in blissful peace, to whom mortals must look upward on account of their supreme grandeur, but who neither troubled themselves about the guidance of the world, which was fixed by eternal laws, nor the fate of individuals. Had he been convinced of the contrary, he would have sacrificed everything he possessed in order, by lavish offerings, to propitiate the immortals in behalf of her to whom he had devoted his life and every faculty of his being.

Like Iras, he, too, could find no rest upon his couch, and when she heard his step she called to him and asked why he did not recover the sleep which he had lost. No one knew the demands the next night might make upon him.

"You will find me awake," he answered quietly.

Then he went to the window which, above the pylons that rose before the main front of the Sebasteum, afforded a view of the Bruchium and the sea. The harbour was now swarming with vessels of every size, garlanded with flowers and adorned

with gay flags and streamers. The report of the successful issue of the first naval battle was believed, and many desired to greet the victorious fleet and hail their sovereign as she entered the harbour.

Many people, equipages, and litters had also gathered on the shore, between the lofty pylons and the huge door of the Sebasteum. They were representatives of the aristocracy of the city; for the majority were attended by richly attired slaves. Many wore costly garlands, and numerous chariots and litters were adorned with gold or silver ornaments, gems, and glittering paste. The stir and movement in front of the palace were ceaseless, and Iras, who was now standing beside her uncle, waved her hand towards it, saying: "The wind of rumour! Yesterday only one or two came; to-day every one who belongs to the 'Inimitable Livers' flocks hither in person to get news. The victory was proclaimed in the market-place, at the theatre, the gymnasium, and the camp. Every one who wears garlands or weapons heard of a battle won. Yesterday, among all the thousands, there was scarcely a single doubter; but to-day—how does it happen? Even among those who as 'Inimitables' have shared all the pleasures, entertainments, and festivities of our noble pair, faith wavers; for if they were firmly convinced of the brilliant victory which was announced loudly enough, they would not come themselves to watch,

to spy, to listen. Just look down! There is the litter of Diogenes—yonder that of Ammonius. The chariot beyond belongs to Melampous. The slaves in the red bombyx garments serve Hermias. They all belong to the society of ‘Inimitables,’ and shared our banquets. That very Apollonius who, for the last half hour, has been trying to question the palace servants, day before yesterday ordered fifty oxen to be slaughtered to Ares, Nike, and the great Isis, as the Queen’s goddess, and when I met him in the temple he exclaimed that this was the greatest piece of extravagance he had ever committed; for even without the cattle Cleopatra and Antony would be sure of victory. But now the wind of rumour has swept away his beautiful confidence also. They are not permitted to see me. The doorkeepers say that I am in the country. The necessity of showing every one a face radiant with the joy of victory would kill me. There comes Apollonius. How his fat face beams! He believes in the victory, and after sunset none of yonder throng will appear here; he is already giving orders to his slaves. He will invite all his friends to a banquet, and won’t spare his costly wines. Capital! At least no one from that company can disturb us. Dion is his cousin, and will be present also. We shall see what these pleasure-lovers will do when they are forced to confront the terrible reality.”

“I think,” replied Archibius, “they will afford

the world a remarkable spectacle; friends won in prosperity who remain constant in adversity."

"Do you?" asked Iras, with sparkling eyes. "If that proves true, how I would praise and value men—the majority of whom without their wealth would be poorer than beggars. But look at yonder figure in the white robe beside the left obelisk—is it not Dion? The crowd is bearing him away—I think it was he."

But she had been deceived; the man whom she fancied she had seen, because her heart so ardently yearned for him, was not near the Sebasteum, and his thoughts were still farther away.

At first he had intended to give the architect the letter which was addressed to him. He would be sure to find him at the triumphal arch which was being erected on the shore of the Bruchium. But on reaching the former place he learned that Gorgias had gone to remove the statues of Cleopatra and Antony from the house of Didymus, and erect them in front of the Theatre of Dionysus. The Regent, Mardion, had ordered it. Gorgias was already superintending the erection of the foundation.

The huge hewn stones which he required for this purpose had been taken from the Temple of Nemesis, which he was supervising. Whatever number of government slaves he needed were at his disposal, so Gorgias's foreman reported, proudly adding that before the sun went down,

the architect would have shown the Alexandrians the marvel of removing the twin statues from one place to another in a single day, and yet establishing them as firmly as the Colossus which had been in Thebes a thousand years.

Dion found the piece of sculpture in front of Didymus's garden, ready for removal, but the slaves who had placed before the platform the rollers on which it was to be moved had already been kept waiting a long time by the architect.

This was his third visit to the old philosopher's house. First, he had been obliged to inform him and his family that their property was no longer in danger; then he had come to tell them at what hour he would remove the statues, which still attracted many curious spectators; and, finally, he had again appeared, to announce that they were to be taken away at once. His foreman or a slave could probably have done this, but Helena—Didymus's granddaughter, Barine's sister—drew him again and again to the old man's home. He would gladly have come still more frequently, for at every meeting he had discovered fresh charms in the beautiful, quiet, thoughtful maiden, who cared so tenderly for her aged grandparents. He believed that he loved her, and she seemed glad to welcome him. But this did not entitle him to seek her hand, though his large, empty house so greatly needed a mistress. His heart had glowed with love for too many. He wished first to test whether this new fancy would

prove more lasting. If he succeeded in remaining faithful even a few days, he would, as it were, reward himself for it, and appear before Didymus as a suitor.

He excused his frequent visits to himself on the pretext of the necessity of becoming acquainted with his future wife, and Helena made the task easier for him. The usual reserve of her manner lessened more and more; nay, the great confidence with which he at first inspired her was increased by his active assistance. When he entered just now, she had even held out her hand to him, and inquired about the progress of his work.

He was overwhelmed with business, but so great was his pleasure in talking with her that he lingered longer than he would have deemed right under any other circumstances, and regarded it as an unpleasant interruption when Barine—for whom his heart had throbbed so warmly only yesterday—entered the tablinum.

The young beauty was by no means content with a brief greeting; but drew Helena entirely away from him. Never had he seen her embrace and kiss her sister so passionately as while hurriedly telling her that she had come to bid farewell to the loved ones in her grandparents' house.

Berenike had arrived with her, but went first to the old couple.

While Barine was telling Helena and Gorgias, also, why all this plan had been formed so hastily,

Gorgias was silently comparing the two sisters. He found it natural that he had once believed that he loved Barine; but she would not have been a fitting mistress of his house. Life at her side would have been a chain of jealous emotions and anxieties, and her stimulating remarks and searching questions, which demanded absolute attention, would not have permitted him, after his return home, wearied by arduous toil, to find the rest for which he longed. His eye wandered from her to her sister, as if testing the space between two newly erected pillars; and Barine, who had noticed his strange manner, suddenly laughed merrily, and asked whether they might know what building was occupying his thoughts, while a good friend was telling him that the pleasant hours in her house were over.

Gorgias started, and the apology he stammered showed so plainly how inattentively he had listened, that Barine would have had good reason to feel offended. But one glance at her sister and another at him enabled her speedily to guess the truth. She was pleased; for she esteemed Gorgias, and had secretly feared that she might be forced to grieve him by a refusal, but he seemed as if created for her sister. Her arrival had probably interrupted them so, turning to Helena, she exclaimed: "I must see my mother and our grandparents. Meanwhile entertain our friend here. We know each other well. He is one of

the few men who can be trusted. That is my honest opinion, Gorgias, and I say it to you also, Helena."

With these words she nodded to both, and Gorgias was again alone with the maiden whom he loved.

It was difficult to begin the conversation anew, and when, spite of many efforts, it would not flow freely, the shout of the overseer, which reached his ear through the opening of the roof, urging the men to work, was like a deliverance. Promising to return again soon, as eagerly as if he had been requested to do so, he took his leave and opened the door leading into the adjoining room. But on the threshold he started back, and Helena, who had followed him, did the same, for there stood his friend Dion, and Barine's beautiful head lay on his breast, while his hand rested as if in benediction on her fair hair. And—no, Gorgias was not mistaken—the slender frame of the lovely woman, whose exuberant vivacity had so often borne him and others away with it, trembled as if shaken by deep and painful emotion.

When Dion perceived his friend, and Barine raised her head, turning her face towards him, it was indeed wet with tears, but their source could not be sorrow; for her blue eyes were sparkling with a happy light.

Yet Gorgias found something in her features which he was unable to express in words—the

reflection of the ardent gratitude that had taken possession of her soul and filled it absolutely.

While seeking the architect, Dion had met Barine, who was on her way to her grandparents, and what he had dreaded the day before happened.

The first glance from her eyes which met his forced the decisive question from his lips.

In brief, earnest words he confessed his love for her, and his desire to make her his own, as the pride and ornament of his house.

Then, in the intensity of her bliss, her eyes overflowed and, under the spell of a great miracle wrought in her behalf, she found no words to answer; but Dion had approached, clasped her right hand in both of his, and frankly acknowledged how, with the image of his strict mother before his eyes, he had wavered and hesitated until love had overmastered him. Now, full of the warmest confidence, he asked whether she would consent to rule as mistress of his home, the honour and ornament of his ancient name? He knew that her heart was his, but he must hear one thing more from her lips——

Here she had interrupted him with the cry, "This one thing—that your wife, in joy and in sorrow, will live for you and you alone? The whole world can vanish for her, now that you have raised her to your side and she is yours."

After this assurance, which sounded like an oath, Dion felt as if a heavy burden had fallen

from his heart, and clasping her in his arms with passionate tenderness, he repeated, "In joy and in sorrow!"

Thus Gorgias and Helena had surprised them, and the architect felt for the first time that there is no distinction between our own happiness and that of those whom we love.

His friend Helena seemed to have the same feeling, when she saw what this day had given her sister; and the philosopher's house, so lately shadowed by anxiety, and many a fear, would soon ring with voices uttering joyous congratulations.

The architect no longer felt that he had a place in this circle, which was now pervaded by a great common joy, and after Dion made a brief explanation, Gorgias's voice was soon heard outside loudly issuing orders to the workmen.

CHAPTER IX.

GORGAS went to his work without delay. When the twin statues were only waiting to be erected in front of the Theatre of Dionysus, Dion sought him. Some impulse urged him to talk to his old friend before leaving the city with his betrothed bride. Since they parted the latter had accomplished the impossible; for the building of the wall on the Choma, ordered by Antony, was commenced, the restoration of the little palace at the point, and many other things connected with the decoration of the triumphal arches, were arranged. His able and alert foreman found it difficult to follow him as he dictated order after order in his writing-tablet.

The conversation with his friend was not a long one, for Dion had promised Barine and her mother to accompany them to the country. Notwithstanding the betrothal, they were to start that very day; for Cæsarion had called upon Barine twice that morning. She had not received him, but the unfortunate youth's conduct induced her to hasten the preparations for her departure.

To avoid attracting attention, they were to use Archibius's large travelling chariot and Nile boat, although Dion's were no less comfortable.

The marriage was to take place in the "abode of peace." The young Alexandrian's own ship, which was to convey the newly wedded pair to Alexandria, bore the name of Peitho, the goddess of persuasion, for Dion liked to be reminded of his oratorical powers in the council. Henceforward it would be called the *Barine*, and was to receive many an embellishment.

Dion confided to his friend what he had learned in relation to the fate of the Queen and the fleet, and, notwithstanding the urgency of the claims upon Gorgias's time, he lingered to discuss the future destiny of the city and her threatened liberty; for these things lay nearest to his heart.

"Fortunately," cried Dion, "I followed my inclination; now it seems to me that duty commands every true man to make his own house a nursery for the cultivation of the sentiments which he inherited from his forefathers and which must not die, so long as there are Macedonian citizens in Alexandria. We must submit if the superior might of Rome renders Egypt a province of the republic, but we can preserve to our city and her council the lion's share of their freedom. Whatever may be the development of affairs, we are and shall remain the source whence Rome draws the largest share of the knowledge which enriches her brain."

"And the art which adorns her rude life," replied Gorgias. "If she is free to crush us without pity, she will fare, I think, like the maiden who raises her foot to trample on a beautiful, rare flower, and then withdraws it because it would be a crime to destroy so exquisite a work of the Creator."

"And what does the flower owe to your maiden," cried Dion, "or our city to Rome? Let us meet her claims with dignified resolution, then I think we shall not have the worst evils to fear."

"Let us hope so. But, my friend, keep your eyes open for other than Roman foes. Now that it will become known that you do not love her, beware of Iras. There is something about her which reminds me of the jackal. Jealousy!—I believe she would be capable of the worst——"

"Yet," Dion interrupted, "Charmian will soften whatever injury Iras plans to do me, and, though I cannot rely much upon my uncle, Archibius is above both and favours us and our marriage."

Gorgias uttered a sigh of relief, and exclaimed, "Then on to happiness!"

"And you must also begin to provide for yours," replied Dion warmly. "Forbid your heart to continue this wandering, nomad life. The tent which the wind blows down is not fit for the architect's permanent residence. Build yourself a fine house, which will defy storms, as you built my

palace. I shall not grudge it, and have already said, the times demand it."

"I will remember the advice," replied Gorgias. "But six eyes are again bent upon me for direction. There are so many important things to be done while we waste the hours in building triumphal arches for the defeated—trophies for an overthrow. But your uncle has just issued orders to complete the work in the most magnificent style. The ways of destiny and the great are dark; may the brightest sunshine illumine yours! A prosperous journey! We shall hear, of course, when you celebrate the wedding, and if I can I shall join you in the Hymenæus. Lucky fellow that you are! Now I'm summoned from over yonder! May Castor and Pollux, and all the gods favourable to travel, Aphrodite, and all the Loves attend your trip to Irenia, and protect you in the realm of Eros and Hymen!"

With these words the warm-hearted man clasped his friend to his breast for the first time. Dion cordially responded, and at last shook his hard right hand with the exclamation:

"Farewell, then, till we meet in Irenia on the wedding day, you dear, faithful fellow."

Then he entered the chariot which stood waiting, and Gorgias gazed after him thoughtfully.

The hyacinthine purple cloak which Dion wore that day had not vanished from his sight when a loud crashing, rattling, and roaring arose behind

him. A hastily erected scaffold, which was to support the pulleys for raising the statues, had collapsed. The damage could be easily repaired, but the accident aroused a troubled feeling in the architect's mind. He was a child of his time, a period when duty commanded the prudent man to heed omens. Experience also taught him that when such a thing happened in his work something unpleasant was apt to occur within the circle of his friends. The veil of the future concealed what might be in store for the beloved couple; but he resolved to keep his eyes open on Dion's behalf and to request Archibius to do the same.

The pressure of work, however, soon silenced the sense of uneasiness. The damage was speedily repaired, and later Gorgias, sometimes with one, sometimes with another tablet or roll of MS. in his hand, issued the most varied orders.

Gradually the light of this dismal day faded.

Ere the night, which threatened to bring rain and storm, closed in, he again rode on his mule to the Bruchium to overlook the progress of the work in the various buildings and give additional directions, for the labour was to be continued during the night.

The north wind was now blowing so violently from the sea that it was difficult to keep the torches and lamps lighted. The gale drove the drops of rain into his face, and a glance northward showed him masses of black clouds beyond

the harbour and the lighthouse. This indicated a bad night, and again the boding sense of coming misfortune stole over him. Yet he set to work swiftly and prudently, helping with his own hands when occasion required.

Night closed in. Not a star was visible in the sky, and the air, chilled by the north wind, grew so cold that Gorgias at last permitted his body slave to wrap his cloak around him. While drawing the hood over his head, he gazed at a procession of litters and men moving towards Lochias.

Perhaps the Queen's children were returning home from some expedition. But probably they were rather private citizens on their way to some festival celebrating the victory; for every one now believed in a great battle and a successful issue of the war. This was proved by the shouts and cheers of the people, who, spite of the storm, were still moving to and fro near the harbour.

The last of the torch-bearers had just passed Gorgias, and he had told himself that a train of litters belonging to the royal family would not move through the darkness so faintly lighted, when a single man, bearing in his hand a lantern, whose flickering rays shone on his wrinkled face, approached rapidly from the opposite direction. It was old Phryx, Didymus's house slave, with whom the architect had become acquainted, while the aged scholar was composing the inscription for the Odeum which Gorgias had erected. The aged

servant had brought him many alterations of his master's first sketch, and Gorgias had reminded him of it the previous day.

The workmen by whom the statues had been raised to the pedestal, amid the bright glare of torches, to the accompaniment of a regular chant, had just dropped the ropes, windlasses, and levers, when the architect recognized the slave.

What did the old man want at so late an hour on this dark night? The fall of the scaffold again returned to his mind.

Was the slave seeking for a member of the family? Did Helena need assistance? He stopped the gray-haired man, who answered his question with a heavy sigh, followed by the maxim, "Misfortunes come in pairs, like oxen." Then he continued: "Yesterday there was great anxiety. To-day, when there was so much rejoicing on account of Barine, I thought directly, 'Sorrow follows joy, and the second misfortune won't be spared us.' And so it proved."

Gorgias anxiously begged him to relate what had happened, and the old man, drawing nearer, whispered that the pupil and assistant of Didymus—young Philotas of Amphissa, a student, and, moreover, a courteous young man of excellent family—had gone to a banquet to which Antyllus, the son of Antony, had invited several of his classmates. This had already happened several times, and he, Phryx, had warned him, for, when the lowly

associate with the lofty, the lowly rarely escape kicks and blows. The young fellow, who usually had behaved no worse than the other Ephebi, had always returned from such festivities with a flushed face and unsteady steps, but to-night he had not even reached his room in the upper story. He had darted into the house as though pursued by the watch, and, while trying to rush up the stairs—it was really only a ladder—he had made a misstep and fell. He, Phryx, did not believe that he was hurt, for none of his limbs ached, even when they were pulled and stretched, and Dionysus kindly protected drunkards; but some demon must have taken possession of him, for he howled and groaned continually, and would answer no questions. True, he was aware, from the festivals of Dionysus, that the young man was one of those who, when intoxicated, weep and lament; but this time something unusual must have occurred, for in the first place his handsome face was coloured black and looked hideous, since his tears had washed away the soot in many places, and then he talked nothing but a confused jargon. It was a pity.

When an attempt was made, with the help of the garden slave, to carry him to his room, he dealt blows and kicks like a lunatic. Didymus now also believed that he was possessed by demons, as often happens to those who, in falling, strike their heads against the ground, and thus wake the demons in the earth. Well, yes, they might be demons, but

only those of wine. The student was just "crazy drunk," as people say. But the old gentleman was very fond of his pupil, and had ordered him, Phryx, to go to Olympus, who, ever since he could remember, had been the family physician.

"The Queen's leech?" asked Gorgias, disapprovingly, and when the slave assented, the architect exclaimed in a positive tone: "It is not right to force the old man out of doors in such a north wind. Age is not specially considerate to age. Now that the statues stand yonder, I can leave my post for half an hour and will go with you. I don't think a leech is needed to drive out *these* demons."

"True, my lord, true!" cried the slave, "but Olympus is our friend. He visits few patients, but he will come to our house in any weather. He has litters, chariots, and splendid mules. The Queen gives him whatever is best and most comfortable. He is skilful, and perhaps can render speedy help. People must use what they have."

"Only where it is necessary," replied the architect. "There are my two mules; follow me on the second. If I don't drive out the demons, you will have plenty of time to trot after Olympus."

This proposal pleased the old slave, and a short time after Gorgias entered the venerable philosopher's tablinum.

Helena welcomed him like an intimate friend. Whenever he appeared she thought the peril was

half over. Didymus, too, greeted him warmly, and conducted him to the little room where the youth possessed by demons lay on a divan.

He was still groaning and whimpering. Tears were streaming down his cheeks, and, whenever any member of the household approached, he pushed him away.

When Gorgias held his hands and sternly ordered him to confess what wrong he had done, he sobbed out that he was the most ungrateful wretch on earth. His baseness would ruin his kind parents, himself, and all his friends.

Then he accused himself of having caused the destruction of Didymus's granddaughter. He would not have gone to Antyllus again had not his recent generosity bound him to him, but now he must atone—ay, atone. Then, as if completely crushed, he continued to mumble the word, "atone!" and for a time nothing more could be won from him.

Didymus, however, had the key to the last sentence. A few weeks before, Philotas and several other pupils of the rhetorician whose lectures in the museum he attended had been invited to breakfast with Antyllus. When the young student loudly admired the beautiful gold and silver beakers in which the wine was served, the reckless host cried: "They are yours; take them with you." When the guests departed the cup-bearer asked Philotas, who had been far from taking the gift

seriously, to receive his property. Antyllus had intended to bestow the goblets; but he advised the youth to let him pay their value in money, for among them were several ancient pieces of most artistic workmanship, which Antony, the extravagant young fellow's father, might perhaps be unwilling to lose.

Thereupon several rolls of gold *solidi* were paid to the astonished student—and they had been of little real benefit, since they had made it possible for him to keep pace with his wealthy and aristocratic classmates and share many of their extravagances. Yet he had not ceased to fulfil his duty to Didymus.

Though he sometimes turned night into day, he gave no serious cause for reproof. Small youthful errors were willingly pardoned; for he was a good-looking, merry young fellow, who knew how to make himself agreeable to the entire household, even to the women.

What had befallen the poor youth that day? Didymus was filled with compassion for him, and, though he gladly welcomed Gorgias, he gave him to understand that the leech's absence vexed him.

But, during a long bachelor career in Alexandria, a city ever gracious to the gifts of Bacchus, Gorgias had become familiar with attacks like those of Philotas and their treatment, and after several jars of water had been brought and he had

been left alone a short time with the sufferer, the philosopher secretly rejoiced that he had not summoned the grey-haired leech into the stormy night. for Gorgias led forth his pupil with dripping hair, it is true, but in a state of rapid convalescence.

The youth's handsome face was freed from soot, but his eyes were bent in confusion on the ground, and he sometimes pressed his hand upon his aching brow. It needed all the old philosopher's skill in persuasion to induce him to speak, and Philotas, before he began, begged Helena to leave the room.

He intended to adhere strictly to the truth, though he feared that the reckless deed into which he had suffered himself to be drawn might have a fatal effect upon his future life.

Besides, he hoped to obtain wise counsel from the architect, to whom he owed his speedy recovery, and whose grave, kindly manner inspired him with confidence; and, moreover, he was so greatly indebted to Didymus that duty required him to make a frank confession—yet he dared not acknowledge one of the principal motives of his foolish act.

The plot into which he had been led was directed against Barine, whom he had long imagined he loved with all the fervour of his twenty years. But, just before he went to the fatal banquet, he had heard that the young beauty was betrothed to Dion. This had wounded him deeply; for in many

a quiet hour it had seemed possible to win her for himself and lead her as his wife to his home in Amphissa. He was very little younger than she, and if his parents once saw her, they could not fail to approve his choice. And the people in Amphissa! They would have gazed at Barine as if she were a goddess.

And now this fine gentleman had come to crush his fairest hopes. No word of love had ever been exchanged between him and Barine, but how kindly she had always looked at him, how willingly she had accepted trivial services! Now she was lost.

At first this had merely saddened him, but after he had drunk the wine, and Antyllus, Antony's son, in the presence of the revellers, over whom Cæsarion presided as "symposiarch" * had accused Barine of capturing hearts by magic spells, he had arrived at the conviction that he, too, had been shamefully allured and betrayed.

He had served for a toy, he said to himself, unless she had really loved him and merely preferred Dion on account of his wealth. In any case, he felt justified in cherishing resentment against Barine, and with the number of goblets which he drained his jealous rage increased.

When urged to join in the escapade which now burdened his conscience he consented with a burning brain in order to punish her for the wrong

* Director of a banquet.

which, in his heated imagination, she had done him.

All this he withheld from the older men and merely briefly described the splendid banquet which Cæsarion, pallid and listless as ever, had directed, and Antyllus especially had enlivened with the most reckless mirth.

The "King of kings" and Antony's son had escaped from their tutors on the pretext of a hunting excursion, and the chief huntsman had not grudged them the pleasure—only they were obliged to promise him that they would be ready to set out for the desert early the next morning.

When, after the banquet, the mixing-vessels were brought out and the beakers were filled more rapidly, Antyllus whispered several times to Cæsarion and then turned the conversation upon Barine, the fairest of the fair, destined by the immortals for the greatest and highest of mankind. This was the "King of kings," Cæsarion, and he also claimed the favour of the gods for himself. But everybody knew that Aphrodite deemed herself greater than the highest of kings, and therefore Barine ventured to close her doors upon their august symposiarch in a manner which could not fail to be unendurable, not only to him but to all the youth of Alexandria. Whoever boasted of being one of the Ephebi might well clench his fist with indignation, when he heard that the insolent beauty kept young men at a distance because she con-

sidered only the older ones worthy of her notice. This must not be! The Ephebi of Alexandria must make her feel the power of youth. This was the more urgently demanded, because Cæsarion would thereby be led to the goal of his wishes.

Barine was going into the country that very evening. Insulted Eros himself was smoothing their way. He commanded them to attack the arrogant fair one's carriage and lead her to him who sought her in the name of youth, in order to show her that the hearts of the Ephebi, whom she disdainfully rejected, glowed more ardently than those of the older men on whom she bestowed her favours.

Here Gorgias interrupted the speaker with a loud cry of indignation, but old Didymus's eyes seemed to be fairly starting from their sockets as he hoarsely shouted an impatient—

“Go on!”

And Philotas, now completely sobered, described with increasing animation the wonderful change that had taken place in the quiet Cæsarion, as if some magic spell had been at work; for scarcely had the revellers greeted Antyllus's words with shouts of joy, declaring themselves ready to avenge insulted youth upon Barine, than the “King of kings” suddenly sprang from the cushions on which he had listlessly reclined, and with flashing eyes shouted that whoever called himself his friend must aid him in the attack.

Here he was urged to still greater haste by another impatient "Go on!" from his master, and hurriedly continued his story, describing how they had blackened their faces and armed themselves with Antyllus's swords and lances. As the sun was setting they went in a covered boat through the Agathodæmon Canal to Lake Mareotis. Everything must have been arranged in advance; for they landed precisely at the right hour.

As, during the trip, they had kept up their courage by swallowing the most fiery wine, Philotas had staggered on shore with difficulty and then been dragged forward by the others. After this he knew nothing more, except that he had rushed with the rest upon a large *harmamaxa*,* and in so doing fell. When he rose from the earth all was over.

As if in a dream he saw Scythians and other guardians of the peace seize Antyllus, while Cæsarion was struggling on the ground with another man. If he was not mistaken it was Dion, Barine's betrothed husband.

These communications were interrupted by many exclamations of impatience and wrath; but now Didymus, fairly frantic with alarm, cried:

"And the child—Barine?"

But when Philotas's sole reply to this question was a silent shake of the head, indignation con-

* A closed Asiatic travelling-carriage with four wheels.

quered the old philosopher, and clutching his pupil's *chiton* with both hands, he shook him violently, exclaiming furiously :

"You don't know, scoundrel ? Instead of defending her who should be dear to you as a child of this household, you joined the rascally scorners of morality and law as the accomplice of this way-layer in purple !"

Here the architect soothed the enraged old man with expostulations, and the assertion that everything must now yield to the necessity of searching for Barine and Dion. He did not know which way to turn, in the amount of labour pressing upon him, but he would have a hasty talk with the foreman and then try to find his friend.

"And I," cried the old man, "must go at once to the unfortunate child.—My cloak, Phryx, my sandals !"

In spite of Gorgias's counsel to remember his age and the inclement weather, he cried angrily :

"I am going, I say ! If the tempest hurls me to the earth, and the bolts of Zeus strike me, so be it. One misfortune more or less matters little in a life which has been a chain of heavy blows of Fate. I buried three sons in the prime of manhood, and two have been slain in battle. Barine, the joy of my heart, I myself, fool that I was, bound to the scoundrel who blasted her joyous existence ; and now that I believed she would be protected from trouble and misconstruction by the side of a

worthy husband, these infamous rascals, whose birth protects them from vengeance, have wounded, perhaps killed her betrothed lover. They trample in the dust her fair name and my white hair!--Phryx, my hat and staff."

The storm had long been raging around the house, which stood close by the sea, and the sail-cloth awning which was stretched over the impluvium noisily rattled the metal rings that confined it. Now so violent a gust swept from room to room that two of the flames in the three-branched lamp went out. The door of the house had been opened, and drenched with rain, a hood drawn over his black head, Barine's Nubian doorkeeper crossed the threshold.

He presented a pitiable spectacle and at first could find no answer to the greetings and questions of the men, who had been joined by Hélène, her grandmother leaning on her arm; his rapid walk against the fury of the storm had fairly taken away his breath.

He had little, however, to tell. Barine merely sent a message to her relatives that, no matter what tales rumour might bring, she and her mother were unhurt. Dion had received a wound in the shoulder, but it was not serious. Her grandparents need have no anxiety; the attack had completely failed.

Doris, who was deaf, had listened vainly, holding her hand to her ear, to catch this report; and

Didymus now told his granddaughter as much as he deemed it advisable for her to know, that she might communicate it to her grandmother, who understood the movements of her lips.

The old man was rejoiced to learn that his granddaughter had escaped so great a peril uninjured, yet he was still burdened by sore anxiety. The architect, too, feared the worst, but by dint of assuring him that he would return at once with full details when he had ascertained the fate of Dion and his betrothed bride, he finally persuaded the old man to give up the night walk through the tempest.

Philotas, with tears in his eyes, begged them to accept his services as messenger or for any other purpose ; but Didymus ordered him to go to bed. An opportunity would be found to enable him to atone for the offence so recklessly committed.

The scholar's peaceful home was deprived of its nocturnal repose, and when Gorgias had gone and Didymus had refused Helena's request to have the aged porter take her to her sister, the old man remained alone with his wife in the tablinum.

She had been told nothing except that thieves had attacked her granddaughter, Barine, and slightly wounded her lover ; but her own heart and the manner of the husband, at whose side she had grown grey, showed that many things were being concealed. She longed to know the story more

fully, but it was difficult for Didymus to talk a long time in a loud tone, so she silenced her desire to learn the whole truth. But, in order to await the architect's report, they did not go to rest.

Didymus had sunk into an armchair, and Doris sat near at her spindle, but without drawing any threads from her distaff. When she heard her husband sigh and saw him bury his face in his hands, she limped nearer to him, difficult as it was for her to move, and stroked his head, now nearly bald, with her hand. Then she uttered soothing words, and, as the anxious, troubled expression did not yet pass from his wrinkled face, she reminded him in faltering yet tender tones how often they had thought they must despair, and yet everything had resulted well.

"Ah! husband," she added, "I know full well that the clouds hanging over us are very black, and I cannot even see them clearly, because you show them at such a distance. Yet I feel that they threaten us with sore tribulation. But, after all, what harm can they do us, if we only keep close together, we two old people and the children of the children whom Hades rent from us? We need only to grow old to perceive that life has a head with many faces. The ugly one of to-day can last no longer than you can keep that deeply furrowed brow. But you need not coerce yourself for my sake, husband. Let it be so. I need merely close my eyes to see how smooth and

beautiful it was in youth, and how pleasant it will look when better days say, 'Here we are!'"

Didymus, with a mournful smile, kissed her grey hair and shouted into her left ear, which was a little less deaf than the other :

"How young you are still, wife!"

CHAPTER X.

THE tempest swept howling from the north across the island of Pharos, and the shallows of Diabathra in the great harbour of Alexandria. The water, usually so placid, rose in high waves, and the beacon on the lighthouse of Sastratus sent the rent abundance of its flames with hostile impetuosity towards the city. The fires in the pitch-pans and the torches on the shore sometimes seemed on the point of being extinguished, at others burst with a doubly brilliant blaze through the smoke which obscured them.

The royal harbour, a fine basin which surrounded in the form of a semicircle the southern part of the Lochias and a portion of the northern shore of the Bruchium, was brightly illuminated every night; but this evening there seemed to be an unusual movement among the lights on its western shore, the private anchorage of the royal fleet.

Was it the storm that stirred them? No. How could the wind have set one torch in the place of another, and moved lights or lanterns in a direction opposite to its violent course? Only a few per-

sons, however, perceived this; for, though joyous anticipation or anxious fears urged many thither, who would venture upon the quay on such a tempestuous night? Besides, no one would have found admittance to the royal port, which was closed on all sides. Even the mole which, towards the west, served as the string to the bow of land surrounding it, had but a single opening and—as every one knew—that was closed by a chain in the same way as the main entrance to the harbour between the Pharos and Alveus Steganus.

About two hours before midnight, spite of the increasing fury of the tempest, the singular movement of the lights diminished, but rarely had the hearts of those for whom they burned throbbed so anxiously. These were the dignitaries and court officials who stood nearest to Cleopatra—about twenty men and a single woman, Iras. Mardion and she had summoned them because the Queen's letter permitted those to whom she had given authority to offer her a quiet reception. After a long consultation they had not invited the commanders of the little Roman garrison left behind. It was doubtful whether those whom they expected would return that night, and the Roman soldiers who were loyal to Antony had gone with him to the war.

The hall in the centre of the private roadstead of the royal harbour, where they had assembled, was furnished with regal magnificence; for it was

a favourite resort of the Queen. The spacious apartment lacked no requisite of comfort, and most of those who were waiting used the well-cushioned couches, while others, harassed by mental anxiety, paced to and fro.

As the room had remained unused for months, bats had made nests there, and now that it was lighted, dazzled by the glare of the lamps and candles, they darted to and fro above the heads of the assembly. Iras had ordered the commander of the Mellakes, or youths, a body-guard composed of the sons of aristocratic Macedonian families, to expel the troublesome creatures, and it diverted the thoughts of these devoted soldiers of the Queen to strike at them with their swords.

Others preferred to watch this futile battle rather than give themselves up to the anxiety which filled their minds. The Regent was gazing mutely at the ground; Iras, pale and absent-minded, was listening to Zeno's statements; and Archibius had gone out of doors, and, unheeding the storm, was looking across the tossing waves of the harbour for the expected ships.

In a wooden shed, whose roof was supported by gaily painted pillars, through which the wind whistled, the servants, from the porters to the litter-bearers, had gathered in groups under the flickering light of the lanterns. The Greeks sat on wooden stools, the Egyptians upon mats on the floor. The largest circle contained the parties who

attended to the Queen's luggage and the upper servants, among whom were several maids.

They had been told that the Queen was expected that night, because it was possible that the strong north wind would bear her ship home with unexpected speed after the victory. But they were better informed: palaces have chinks in doors and curtains, and are pervaded by a very peculiar echo which bears even a whisper distinctly from ear to ear.

The body-slave of the commander-in-chief Seleukus was the principal spokesman. His master had reached Alexandria but a few hours ago from the frontier fortress of Pelusium, which he commanded. A mysterious order from Lucilius, Antony's most faithful friend, brought from Taenarum by a swift galley, had summoned him hither.

The freedman Beryllus, a loquacious Sicilian, who, as an actor, had seen better days ere pirates robbed him of his liberty, had heard many new things, and his hearers listened eagerly; for ships coming from the north, which touched at Pelusium, had confirmed and completed the evil tidings that had penetrated the Sebasteum.

According to his story, he was as well informed as if he had been an eye-witness of the naval battle; for he had been present during his master's conversation with many ship-captains and messengers from Greece. He even assumed the air of a loyal, strictly silent servant, who would only ven-

ture to confirm and deny what the Alexandrians had already learned. Yet his knowledge consisted merely of a confused medley of false and true occurrences. While the Egyptian fleet had been defeated at Actium, and Antony, flying with Cleopatra, had gone first to Tænarum at the end of the Peloponnesian coast, he asserted that the army and fleet had met on the Peloponnesian coast and Octavianus was pursuing Antony, who had turned towards Athens, while Cleopatra was on her way to Alexandria.

His "trustworthy intelligence" had been patched together from a few words caught from Seleukus at table, or while receiving and dismissing messengers. In other matters his information was more accurate.

While for several days the harbour of Alexandria had been closed, vessels were permitted to enter Pelusium, and all captains of newly arrived ships and caravans were compelled to report to Beryllus's master, the commandant of the important frontier fortress.

He had quitted Pelusium the night before. The strong wind had driven the trireme before it so swiftly that it was difficult for even the seagulls to follow. It was easy for the listeners to believe this; for the storm outside howled louder and louder, whistling through the open hall where the servants had gathered. Most of the lamps and torches had been blown out, the pitch-pans only

sent forth still blacker clouds of smoke, lit by red and yellow flames, and the closed lanterns alone continued to diffuse a flickering light. So the wide space, dim with smoke, was illumined only by a dull, varying glimmer.

One of the porters had furnished wine to shorten the hours of waiting ; but it could only be drunk in secret, so there were no goblets. The jars wandered from mouth to mouth, and every sip was welcome, for the wind blew keenly, and besides, the smoke irritated their throats.

The freedman, Beryllus, was often interrupted by paroxysms of coughing, especially from the women, while relating the evil omens which were told to his master in Pelusium. Each was well authenticated and surpassed its predecessor in significance.

Here one of Iras's maids interrupted him to tell the story of the swallows on the "Antonius," Cleopatra's admiral galley. He could scarcely report from Pelusium an omen of darker presage.

But Beryllus gazed at her with a pitying smile, which so roused the expectations of the others that the overseer of the litter and baggage porters, who were talking loudly together, hoarsely shouted, " Silence ! "

Soon no sound was heard in the open space save the shrill whistling of the wind, a word of command to the harbour-guards, and the freedman's

voice, which he lowered to increase the charm of the mysterious events he was describing.

He began with the most fulsome praise of Cleopatra and Antony, reminding his hearers that the Emperor was a descendant of Herakles. The Alexandrians especially were aware that their Queen and Antony claimed and desired to be called "The new Isis" and "The new Dionysus." But every one who beheld the Roman must admit that in face and figure he resembled a god far more than a man.

The Emperor had appeared as Dionysus, especially to the Athenians. In the proscenium of the theatre in that city was a huge bas-relief of the Battle of the Giants, the famous work of an ancient sculptor—he, Beryllus, had seen it—and from amid the numerous figures in this piece of sculpture the tempest had torn but a single one—which? Dionysus, the god as whose mortal image Antony had once caroused in a vine-clad arbour in the presence of the Athenians. The storm to-night was at the utmost like the breath of a child, compared with the hurricane which could wrest from the hard marble the form of Dionysus. But Nature gathers all her forces when she desires to announce to short-sighted mortals the approach of events which are to shake the world.

The last words were quoted from his master, who had studied in Athens. They had escaped from his burdened soul when he heard of another

portent, of which a ship from Ostia had brought tidings. The flourishing city Pisaura——

Here, however, he was interrupted, for several of those present had learned, weeks before, that this place had sunk in the sea, but merely pitied the unfortunate inhabitants.

Beryllus quietly permitted them to free themselves from the suspicion that people in Alexandria had had tidings of so remarkable an event later than those in Pelusium, and at first answered their query what this had to do with the war merely by a shrug of the shoulders; but when the overseer of the porters also put the question, he went on: "The omen made a specially deep impression upon our minds, for we know what Pisaura is, or rather how it came into existence. The hapless city which dark Hades engulfed really belonged to Antony, for in the days of its prosperity he was its founder."

He measured the group with a defiant glance, and there was no lack of evidences of horror; nay, one of the maid-servants shrieked aloud, for the storm had just snatched a torch from the iron rings in the wall and hurled it on the floor close beside the listener.

Suspense seemed to have reached its height. Yet it was evident that Beryllus had not yet drawn his last arrow from the quiver.

The maid-servant, whose scream had startled the others, had regained her composure and seemed eager to hear some other new and terrible omen,

for, with a beseeching glance, she begged the freedman not to withhold the other things he knew.

He pointed to the drops of perspiration which, spite of the wind sweeping through the hall, covered her brow: "You must use your handkerchief. Merely listening to my tale will dampen your skin. Stone statues are made of harder material, but a soul dwells within them too. Their natures may be harsher or more gentle; they bring us woe or heal heavy sorrows, according to their mood. Every one learns this who raises his hands to them in prayer. One of these statues stands in Alba. It represents Mark Antony, in whose honour it was erected by the city. And it foresaw what menaced the man whose stone double it is. Ay, open your ears! About four days ago a ship's captain came to my master and in my presence this man reported—he grew as pale as ashes while he spoke—what he himself had witnessed. Drops of perspiration had oozed from the statue of Antony in Alba. Horror seized all the citizens; men and women came to wipe the brow and cheeks of the statue, but the drops of perspiration did not cease to drip, and this continued several days and nights. The stone image had felt what was impending over the living Mark Antony. It was a horrible spectacle, the man said."

Here the speaker paused, and the group of listeners started, for the clang of a gong was heard

outside, and the next instant all were on their feet hastening to their posts.

The officials in the magnificent hall had also risen. Here the silence had been interrupted only by low whispers. The colour had faded from most of the grave, anxious faces, and their timid glances shunned one another.

Archibius had first perceived, by the flames of the Pharos, the red glimmer which announced the approach of the royal galley. It had not been expected so early, but was already passing the islands into the great harbour. It was probably the Antonius, the ship on which the old swallows had pecked the young ones to death.

Though the waves were running high, even in the sheltered harbour, they scarcely rocked the massive vessel. An experienced pilot must have steered it past the shallows and cliffs on the eastern side of the roadstead, for instead of passing around the island of Antirrhodus as usual, it kept between the island and the Lochias, steering straight towards the entrance into the little royal harbour. The pitch-pans on both sides had been filled with fresh resin and tow to light the way. The watchers on the shore could now see its outlines distinctly.

It was the Antonius, and yet it was not.

Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, who was standing beside Iras, wrapped his cloak closer around his shivering limbs, pointed to it, and whispered,

"Like a woman who leaves her parents' house in the rich array of a bride, and returns to it an impoverished widow."

Iras drew herself up, and with cutting harshness replied, "Like the sun veiled by mists, but which will soon shine forth again more radiantly than ever."

"Spoken from the depths of my soul," said the old courtier eagerly, "so far as the Queen is concerned. Of course, I did not allude to her Majesty, but to the ship. You were ill when it left the harbour, garlanded with flowers and adorned with purple sails. And now! Even this flickering light shows the wounds and rents. I am the last person whom you need tell that our sun Cleopatra will soon regain its old radiance, but at present it is very chilly and cold here by the water's edge in this stormy air; and when I think of our first moment of meeting——"

"Would it were over!" murmured Iras, wrapping herself closer in her cloak. Then she drew back shivering, for the rattle of the heavy chain, which was drawn aside from the opening of the harbour, echoed with an uncanny sound through the silence of the night. A mountain seemed to weigh upon the watchers' breasts, for the wooden monster which now entered the little harbour moved forward as slowly and silently as a spectral ship. It seemed as if life were extinct on the huge galley usually swarming with a numerous

crew; as if a vessel were about to cast anchor whose sailors had fallen victims to the plague. Nothing was heard save an occasional word of command, and the signal whistles of the flute-player who directed the rowers. A few lanterns burned with a wavering light on the vast length of her decks. The brilliant illumination which usually shone through the darkness would have attracted the attention of the Alexandrians.

Now it was close to the landing. The group on shore watched every inch of its majestic progress with breathless suspense, but when the first rope was flung to the slaves on shore several men in Greek robes pressed forward hurriedly among the courtiers.

They had come with a message, whose importance would permit no delay, to the Regent Mardion, who stood between Zeno and Iras, gazing gloomily at the ground with a frowning brow. He was pondering over the words in which to address the Queen, and within a few minutes the ship would have made her landing, and Cleopatra might cross the bridge. To disturb him at that moment was an undertaking few who knew the irritable, uncertain temper of the eunuch would care to risk. But the tall Macedonian, who for a short time attracted the eyes of most of the spectators from the galley, ventured to do so. It was the captain of the night-watch, the aristocratic commander of the police force of the city.

"Only a word, my lord," he whispered to the Regent, "though the time may be inopportune."

"As inopportune as possible," replied the eunuch with repellent harshness.

"We will say as inopportune as the degree of haste necessary for its decision. The King Cæsarion, with Antyllus and several companions, attacked a woman. Blackened faces. A fight. Cæsarion and the woman's companion—an aristocrat, member of the Council—slightly wounded. Lic-tors interfered just in time. The young gentlemen were arrested. At first they refused to give their names——"

"Cæsarion slightly, *really* only slightly wounded?" asked the eunuch with eager haste.

"Really and positively. Olympus was summoned at once. A knock on the head. The man who was attacked flung him on the pavement in the struggle."

"Dion, the son of Eumenes, is the man," interrupted Iras, whose quick ear had caught the officer's report. "The woman—is Barine, the daughter of the artist Leonax."

"Then you know already?" asked the Macedonian in surprise.

"So it seems," answered Mardion, gazing into the girl's face with a significant glance. Then, turning to her rather than to the Macedonian, he added, "I think we will have the young rascals

set free and brought to Lochias with as little publicity as possible."

"To the palace?" asked the Macedonian.

"Of course," replied Iras firmly. "Each to his own apartments, where they must remain until further orders."

"Everything else must be deferred until after the reception," added the eunuch, and the Macedonian, with a slight, haughty nod, drew back.

"Another misfortune," sighed the eunuch.

"A boyish prank," Iras answered quickly, "but even a still greater misfortune is less than nothing so long as we are not conscious of it. This unpleasant occurrence must be concealed for the present from the Queen. Up to this time it is a vexation, nothing more—and it can and must remain so; for we have it in our power to uproot the poisonous tree whence it emanates."

"You look as if no one could better perform the task," the Regent interrupted, with a side glance at the galley, "so you shall have the commission. It is the last one I shall give, during the Queen's absence, in her name."

"I shall not fail," she answered firmly.

When Iras again looked towards the landing-place she saw Archibius standing alone, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. Impulse prompted her to tell her uncle what had happened; but at the first step she paused, and her thin lips uttered a firm "No."

Her friend had become a stone in her path. If necessary, she would find means to thrust him also aside, spite of his sister Charmian and the old tie which united him to Cleopatra. He had grown weak, Charmian had always been so.

She would have had time enough now to consider what step to take first, had not her heart ached so sorely.

After the huge galley lay moored, several minutes elapsed ere two *pastophori* of the goddess Isis, who guarded the goblet of Nektanebus, taken from the temple treasures and borne along in a painted chest, stepped upon the bridge, followed by Cleopatra's first chamberlain, who in a low tone announced the approach of the Queen and commanded the waiting groups to make way. A double line of torch-bearers had been stationed from the landing to the gate leading into the Bruchium, and the other on the north, which was the entrance to the palaces on the Lochias, since it was not known where Cleopatra would desire to go. The chamberlain, however, said that she would spend the night at Lochias, where the children lived, and ordered all the flickering, smoking torches, save a few, to be extinguished.

Mardion, the Keeper of the Seal, Archibius, and Iras were standing by the bridge a little in advance of the others, when voices were heard on the ship, and the Queen appeared, preceded by several

lantern-bearers and followed by a numerous train of court officials, pages, maids, and female slaves. Cleopatra's little hand rested on Charmian's arm, as, with a haughty carriage of the head, she moved towards the shore. A thick veil covered her face, and a large, dark cloak concealed her figure. How elastic her step was still! how proud yet graceful was the gesture with which she waved a greeting to Mardion and Zeno!

Extending her hand to raise Iras, who had sunk prostrate before her, she kissed her on the forehead, whispering, "The children?"

"All is well with them," replied the girl.

Then the returning sovereign greeted the others with a gracious gesture, but vouchsafed a word to no one until the eunuch stepped before her to deliver his address of welcome. She motioned him aside with a curt "Later"; and when Zeno held open the door of the litter, she said in a stifled tone: "I will walk. After the rocking of the galley in this tempest, I feel reluctant to enter the litter. There are many things to be considered to-day. An idea came to me on the way home. Summon the captain of the harbour and his chief counsellors, the heads of the war office, the superintendent of the fortifications on land and water, especially the Aristarch and Gorgias—I want to see them. Time presses. They must be here in two hours—no, in an hour and a half. I wish to examine all their plans and charts of the eastern

frontier, especially the river channels and canals in the Delta."

Then she turned to Archibius, who had approached the litter, laid her hand upon his arm, and though her veil prevented him from seeing her sparkling eyes, he felt them shining deep into his heart, as the voice whose melody had often enthralled his soul cried, "We will take it as a favourable omen that it is again *you* who lead me to this palace in a time of trouble."

His overflowing heart found expression in the warm reply, "Whenever it may be, forever and ever this arm and this life are yours!" And the Queen answered in a tone of earnest belief, "I know it."

Then, with her hand still resting on his arm, she moved forward; but when he began to ask whether she really had cause to speak of a time of trouble, she cut him short with the entreaty: "Not now. Let us say nothing. It is worse than bad—as evil as possible. Yet no. Few are permitted, in an hour of trouble, to lean on the arm of a faithful friend."

The words were accompanied with a light pressure of her little hand, and it seemed as if his old heart was growing young.

He dared not speak, for her wish was law; but while moving silently at her side, first along the shore, then through the gate, and finally over the marble flagstones which led to the palace portal, it

seemed as if he beheld, instead of the veiled head of the hapless Queen, the soft, light-brown locks which floated around the face of a happy child. Before his mental vision rose the little mistress of the garden of Epicurus. He saw the sparkle of her large blue eyes, which never ceased to question, yet appeared to contain the mystery of the world. He fancied he heard once more the silvery cadence of her voice and the bewitching magic of her pure, childlike laughter, and it was hard to remember what she had become.

Snatched away from the present, yet conscious that Fate had granted him a great boon in this sorrowful hour, he moved on at her side and led her through the main entrance, the spacious inner court-yard of the palace. At the rear was the great door opening into the Queen's apartments, before which Mardion, Iras, and their companions had already stationed themselves. At the left was a smaller one leading into the wing occupied by the children.

Archibius was about to conduct Cleopatra across the lighted court-yard, but she motioned towards the children's rooms, and he understood her.

At the threshold her hand fell from his arm, and when he bowed as if to retire, she said kindly: "There is Charmian. You both deserve to accompany me to the spot where childhood is dreaming and peace of mind and painlessness have their

abode. But respect for the Queen has prevented the brother and sister from greeting each other after so long a separation. Do so now! Then, follow me."

While speaking, she hastened with the swift step of youth into the atrium and up the staircase which led to the sleeping-rooms of the princes and princesses.

Archibius and Charmian obeyed her bidding; the brother clasped his sister affectionately in his arms, and in hurried tones, with tears streaming from her eyes, she informed him that to her all seemed lost.

Antony had behaved in a manner for which no words of condemnation or regret were adequate. Probably he would follow Cleopatra; the fleet, and perhaps the army also, were destroyed. Her fate lay in the hands of Octavianus.

Then she preceded him towards the staircase, where Iras was standing with a tall Syrian, who bore a striking resemblance to Philostratus, Barine's former husband. It was his brother Alexas, the trusted favourite of Mark Antony. His place should now have been with him, and Archibius asked his sister with a hasty look how this man chanced to be in the Queen's train.

"His skill in reading the stars," was the reply. "His flattering tongue. He is a parasite of the worst kind, but he tells her many things, he diverts her, and she tolerates him near her person."

As soon as Iras saw the direction in which Cleopatra had turned, she had hastened after her to accompany her to the children. The Syrian Alexas had stopped her to express his joy in meeting her again. Even before the outbreak of the war he had devoted himself zealously to her, and he now plainly showed that during the long period of separation his feelings had by no means cooled. Like his brother, he had a head too small for his body, but his well-formed features were animated by a pair of eyes sparkling with a keen, covetous expression.

Iras, too, seemed glad to welcome the favourite, but ere the brother and sister reached the staircase she left him to embrace Charmian, her aunt and companion, with the affection of a daughter.

They found the Queen in the anteroom of the children's apartments. Euphronion, their tutor, had awaited her there, and hurriedly gave, in the most rapturous terms, his report of them and the wonderful gifts which became more and more apparent in each, now as a heritage from their mother, now from their father.

Cleopatra had interrupted the torrent of his enthusiastic speech with many a question, meanwhile endeavouring to loose the veil wound about her head; but the little hands, unaccustomed to the task, failed. Iras noticed it from the stairs and, hastening up the last steps, skilfully released her from the long web of lace.

The Queen acknowledged the service by a gracious nod, but when the chief eunuch opened the door leading into the children's rooms, she called joyously to the brother and sister, "Come!" The tutor, who was obliged to leave the charge of his pupils' sleeping apartments to the eunuchs and nurses, drew back, but Iras felt it a bitter affront to be excluded from this visit. Her cheeks flushed and paled; her thin lips were more firmly compressed, and she gazed intently at the basket of fruit in the mosaic floor at her feet as if she were counting the cherries that filled it. But she suddenly pushed the little curls back from her forehead, darted swiftly down the stairs, and called to Alexas just as he was about to leave the atrium.

The Syrian hastened towards her, extolling the good fortune that made his sun rise for him a second time that night, but she cut him short with the words: "Cease this foolish love-making. It would be far better for us both to become allies in serious, bitter earnest. I am ready."

"So am I!" cried the Syrian rapturously, pressing his hand upon his heart.

Meanwhile Cleopatra had entered the chamber where the children lay sleeping. Deep silence pervaded the lofty hall hung with bright-hued carpets, and softly lighted by three lamps with rose-colored globes. An arch, supported by pillars of Libyan marble, divided the wide space. In the first, near a window closely muffled with draperies, stood two

ivory beds, surmounted with crowns of gold and silver set with pearls and turquoises. Around the edge, carved by the hands of a great artist, ran a line of happy children dancing to the songs of birds in blossoming bushes.

The couches were separated by a heavy curtain which the eunuchs had raised at the approach of the Queen. Cleopatra could now see them all at a single glance, and the picture was indeed one of exquisite charm; for on these beautiful couches slept the twins, the ten-year-old children of Cleopatra and Antony—Antonius Helios and Cleopatra Selene. The girl was pink and white, fair and wonderfully lovely; the boy no less beautiful, but with ebon-black hair, like his father. Both curly heads were turned towards the side, and rested on a dimpled hand pressed upon the silken pillow.

Upon a third bed, beyond the arch, was Alexander, the youngest prince, a lovely boy of six, the Queen's darling.

After gazing a long while at the twins, and pressing a light kiss upon cheeks flushed with slumber, she turned to the youngest child and sank beside his couch as if forced to bend the knee before some apparition which Heaven had vouchsafed to her. Tears streamed from her eyes as, drawing the child carefully towards her, she kissed his mouth, eyes, and cheeks, and then laid him gently back upon the pillows. The boy, however, did not instantly relapse into slumber, but threw his little

plump arms around his mother's neck, murmuring incomprehensible words. She joyously submitted to his caresses, till sleep again overpowered him, and his little hands fell back upon the bed.

She lingered a short time longer, with her brow resting on the ivory of the couch, praying for this child and his brother and sister. When she rose again her cheeks were wet with tears, and she pressed her hand upon her breast. Then, beckoning to Charmian and Archibius, she motioned towards Alexander and the twins, saying, as she saw tears glittering in the eyes of both: "I know you have lost this happiness for my sake. For each one of these children a great empire would not be too high a price; for them all—— What does earth contain that I would not bestow? Yet what can I still call my own?"

Her smiling face clouded as she asked the question. The vision of the lost battle again rose before her mind. Her own power was lost, forfeited, and with it the independence of the native land which she loved. Rome was already stretching out her hand to add it to the others as a new province. But this should not be! Her twin children yonder, sleeping beneath crowns, must *wear* them! And the boy slumbering on the pillows? How many kingdoms Antony had bestowed! What remained for her to give?

Again she bent to the child. A beautiful dream must have hovered over him, for he was smiling in

his sleep. A flood of maternal love welled up in her agitated heart, and, as she saw the companions of her childhood also gazing tenderly at the little sleeper, she remembered the days of her own youth, and the quiet happiness which she had enjoyed in her garden of Epicurus.

Power and splendour had begun for her beyond its confines, but the greater the heights of worldly grandeur she attained, the more distant, the more irrecoverable became the consciousness of the happiness which she had once gratefully enjoyed, and for which she had never ceased to long. And as she now gazed once more at the peaceful, smiling face, whence all pain and anxiety seemed worlds away, and all the love which her heart contained appeared to be pouring towards him, the question arose in her mind whether this boy, for whom she possessed no crown, might not be the only happy mortal of them all—happy in the sense of the master. Deeply moved by this thought, she turned to Archibius and Charmian, exclaiming in a subdued tone, in order not to rouse the sleeper: “Whatever destiny may await us, I commend this child to your special love and care. If Fate denies him the lustre of the crown and the elation of power, teach him to enjoy* that other happiness, which—how long ago it is!—your father unfolded to his mother.”

Archibius kissed her robe, and Charmian her hands; but Cleopatra, drawing a long breath, said: “The mother has already taken too much time

from the Queen. I have ordered the news of my arrival to be kept from Cæsarion. This was well. The most important matters will be settled before our meeting. Everything relating to me and to the state must be decided within an hour. But, first, I am something more than mother and Queen. The woman also asserts her claim. I will find time for you, my friend, to-morrow!—To my chamber first, Charmian. But you need rest still more than I. Go with your brother. Send Iras to me. She will be glad to use her skilful fingers again in her mistress's service."

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CHAPTER XI.

THE Queen had left her bath. Iras had arranged the still abundant waves of her hair, now dark-brown in hue, and robed her magnificently to receive the dignitaries whom, spite of the late hour of the night, she expected.

How wonderfully she had retained her beauty ! It seemed as if Time had not ventured to touch this masterpiece of feminine loveliness ; yet the Greek's keen eye detected here and there some token of the vanishing spell of youth. She loved her mistress, yet her inmost soul rejoiced whenever she detected in her the same changes which began to appear in herself, the woman of seven-and-twenty, so many years her sovereign's junior. She would gladly have given Cleopatra everything at her command, yet she felt as if she must praise Nature for an act of justice, when she perceived that even her royal favourite was not wholly relieved from the law which applied to all.

"Cease your flattery," said Cleopatra, smiling mournfully. "They say that the works of the Pharaohs here on the Nile flout Time. The inex-

orable destroyer is less willing to permit this from the Queen of Egypt. These are grey hairs, and they came from this head, however eagerly you may deny it. Whose save my own are these lines around the corners of the eyes and on the brow? What say you to the tooth which my lips do not hide so kindly as you assert? It was injured the night before the luckless battle. My dear, faithful, skilful Olympus, the prince of leeches, is the only one who can conceal such things. But it would not do to take the old man to the war, and Glaucus is far less adroit. How I missed Olympus during those fatal hours! I seemed a monster even to myself, and he—Antony's eye is only too keen for such matters. What *is* the love of men? A blackened tooth may prove its destruction. An aspect obnoxious to the gaze will pour water on the fiercest fire. What hours I experienced, Iras! Many a glance from him seemed an insult, and, besides, my heart was filled with torturing anxiety.

“Something had evidently come between us! I felt it. The trouble began soon after he left Alexandria. It gnawed my soul like a worm, and now that I am here again I must see clearly. He will follow me in a few days, I know. Pinarius Scarpus, with his untouched legions, is in Parætonium, whither he went. At Tænarum he resolved to retire from the world which he, on whom it had bestowed so much that is great, hates because he

has given it cause for many a shake of the head. But the old spirit woke again, and if Fortune, usually so faithful, still aids him, a large force will soon join the new African army. The Asiatic princes—— But the ruler of the state must be silent. I entered this room to give the woman her just rights, and the woman shall have them. He will soon be here. He cannot live without me. It is not alone the beaker of Nektanebus which draws him after me!”

“When the greatest of the great, Julius Cæsar, sued for your love in Alexandria, and Antony on the Cydnus, you did not possess the goblet,” observed Iras. “It is two years since Anubis permitted you to borrow the masterpiece from the temple treasures, and within a few days you will be obliged to restore it. That a mysterious spell emanates from the cup is certain, but one still more powerful dwells in the magic of your own nature.”

“Would that it might assert itself to-day!” cried the Queen. “At any rate the power of the beaker impelled Antony to do many things. I am not vain enough to believe that it was love, that it was solely the spell of my own personality which drew him to me in that disastrous hour. That battle, that incomprehensible, disgraceful battle! You were ill, and could not see our fleet when it set sail; but even experienced spectators said that handsomer, larger vessels were never beheld. I was right in insisting that the decision of the conflict

should be left to them. I was entitled to call them mine. Had we conquered, what a proud delight it would have been to say, 'The weapons which you gave to the man you loved gained him the sovereignty of the world!' Besides, the stars had assured me that good fortune would attend us on the sea. They had given the same message to Anubis here, and to Alexas upon Antony's galley. I also trusted the spell of the goblet, which had already compelled Antony to do many things he opposed. So I succeeded in having the decision of the conflict left to the fleet, but the prediction was false, false, false!—how utterly, was to be proved only too soon.

"If I had only been told in time what I learned later! After the defeat people were more loquacious. That one remark of a veteran commander of the foot-soldiers would probably have sufficed to open my eyes. He had asked Mark Antony why he fixed his hopes on miserable wood, exclaiming, 'Let the Phœnicians and Egyptians war on the water, but leave *us* the land where we are accustomed, with our feet firmly set upon the earth, to fight, conquer, or die!' This alone, I am sure, would have changed my resolve in a happy hour. But it was kept from me.

"The conflict began. Our troops had lost patience. The left wing of the fleet advanced. At first I watched the battle eagerly, with a throbbing heart. How proudly the huge galleys moved for-

ward! Everything was going admirably. Antony had made an address, assuring the warriors that, even without soldiers, our ships would destroy the foe by their mere height and size. What orator can so carry his hearers with him! I, too, was still fearless. Who cherishes anxiety when confidently expecting victory? When he went on board his own ship, after bidding me farewell far less cordially than usual, I became more troubled. I thought it was evident that his love was waning. What had I become since we left Alexandria, and Olympus no longer attended me! Matters could not continue in this way. I would leave the direction of the war to him, and vanish from his eyes. After he had looked into the beaker of Nektanebus, he yielded to my will, but often with indignation. The unconcealed, ineffaceable lines, and the years, the cruel years!"

"What thoughts are these?" cried Iras. "Let me take oath, my sovereign mistress, that as you stand before me——"

"Thanks to this toilet-table and the new compounds of Olympus in these boxes! At that time, I tell you, I was fairly startled at the sight of my own face. Trouble does not enhance beauty, and what condemnation the Romans had heaped on the woman who meddled with war, the craft of man! I had answers for them, but I would not endure it longer. I had previously determined to hold aloof from the battle on land; but even at the com-

mencement of the conflict, spite of its favourable promise, I longed to leave Antony and return to the children. They do not heed the colour of their mother's hair, nor her wrinkles; and he, when he had looked for and called me in vain, would feel for the first time what he possessed in me, would miss me, and with the longing the old love would awaken with fresh ardour. As soon as the fleet had gained the victory I would have the prow of my galley turned southward and, without a farewell, exclaiming only, 'We will meet in Alexandria!' set sail for Egypt.

"I summoned Alexas, who had remained with me, and ordered him to give me a signal as soon as the battle was decided in our favour. I remained on deck. Then I saw the ships of the foe describing a wide circle. The *nauarch* told me that Agrippa was trying to surround us. This roused a feeling of discomfort. I began to repent having meddled with men's work.

"Antony looked across at me from his galley. I waved my hand to point out the peril, but instead of eagerly and lovingly answering the greeting, as of yore, he turned his back, and in a short time after the wildest uproar arose around me. One ship became entangled with another, planks and poles shattered with a loud crash. Shouts, the cries and moans of the combatants and the wounded, mingled with the thunder of the stones hurled by the catapults, and the sharp notes of the signals

which sounded like calls for help. Two soldiers, stricken by arrows, fell beside me. It was horrible! Yet my courage remained steadfast, even when a squadron—it was commanded by Aruntius—pressed upon the fleet. I saw another line of galleys steering directly towards us, and a Roman vessel assailed by one of mine—I had named her the Selene—turn on her side and sink. This pleased me and seemed like the first presage of victory. I again ordered Alexas to have the ship's prow turned as soon as the result of the battle was decided. Ere I had ceased speaking, Jason, the steward—you know him—appeared with refreshments. I took the beaker, but, ere I could raise it to my lips, he fell to the deck with a cloven skull, mingling his blood with the spilled juice of the grape. My blood seemed fairly to freeze in my veins, and Alexas, trembling and deadly pale, asked, 'Do you command us to quit the battle?'

"Every fibre of my being urged me to give the order, but I controlled myself, and asked the *nauarch*, who was standing on the bridge before me, 'Are we gaining the advantage?' The reply was a positive 'Yes.' I thought the fitting time had come, and called to him to steer the galley southward. But the man did not seem to understand. Meanwhile the noise of the conflict had grown louder and louder. So, in spite of Charmian, who besought me not to interfere in the battle, I sent Alexas to the commander on the bridge, and while

he talked with the grey-bearded seaman, who wrathfully answered I know not what, I glanced at the nearest ship—I no longer knew whether it was friend or foe—and as I saw the rows of restless oars moving in countless numbers to and fro, it seemed as if every ship had become a huge spider, and the long wooden handles of the oars were its legs and feet. Each of these monsters appeared to be seeking to snare me in a horrible net, and when the *nauarch* came to beseech me to wait, I imperiously commanded him to obey my orders.

“The luckless man bowed, and performed his Queen’s behest. The giant was turned, and forced a passage through the maze.

“I breathed more freely.

“What had threatened me like the legs of huge spiders became oars once more. Alexas led me under a roof, where no missiles could reach me. My desire was fulfilled. I had escaped Antony’s eyes, and we were going towards Alexandria and my children. When I at last looked around I saw that my other ships were following. I had not given this order, and was terribly startled. When I sought Alexas, he had vanished. The centurion whom I sent to order the *nauarch* to give the signal to the other ships to return to the battle, reported that the captain’s dead body has just been borne away, but that the command should be given. How this was done I do not know, but it produced

no effect, and no one noticed the anxious waving of my handkerchief.

"We had left Antony's galley—he was standing on the bridge—far behind.

"I had waved my hand as we passed close by, and he hurried down to bend far over the bulwark and shout to me. I can still see his hands raised to his bearded lips. I did not understand what he said, and only pointed southward and in spirit wished him victory and that this separation might tend to the welfare of our love. But he shook his head, pressed his hand despairingly to his brow, and waved his arms as though to give me a sign, but the Antonias swept far ahead of his ship and steered straight towards the south.

"I breathed more freely, in the pleasant consciousness of escaping a twofold danger. Had I remained long before Antony's eyes, looking as I did then, it might——

"Wretched blunder of a wretched woman, I say now. But at that time I could not suspect what a terrible doom I had brought down in that hour upon ourselves, my children, perhaps the whole world; so I remained under the thrall of these petty fears and thoughts until wounded men were carried past me. The sight distressed me; you know how sensitive I am, and with what difficulty I endure and witness suffering.

"Charmian led me to the cabin. There I first realized what I had done. I had hoped to aid in

crushing the hated foe, and now perhaps it was I who had built for him the bridge to victory, to sovereignty, to our destruction. Pursued by such thoughts, as if by the Furies, I paced restlessly to and fro.

"Suddenly I heard a loud noise on deck. A crashing blow seemed to shake the huge ship. We were pursued! A Roman galley had boarded mine! This was my thought as I grasped the dagger Antony had given me.

"But Charmian came back with tidings which seemed scarcely less terrible than the baseless fear. I had angrily commanded her to leave me because she had urged me to revoke the command to turn back. Now, deadly pale, she announced that Mark Antony had left his galley, followed me in a little five-oared boat, and come on board our ship.

"My blood froze in my veins.

"He had come, I imagined, to force me to return to the battle and, drawing a long breath, my defiant pride urged me to show him that I was the Queen and would obey only my own will, while my heart impelled me to sink at his feet and beseech him, without heeding me, to issue any order which promised to secure a victory.

"But he did not come.

"I sent Charmian up again. Antony had been unable to continue the conflict when parted from me. Now he sat in front of the cabin with his head resting on his hands, staring at the planks of the

deck like one distraught. He, he—Antony! The bravest horseman, the terror of the foe, let his arms fall like a shepherd-boy whose sheep are stolen by the wolves. Mark Antony, the hero who had braved a thousand dangers, had flung down his sword. Why, why? Because a woman had yielded to idle fears, obeyed the yearning of a mother's heart, and fled? Of all human weaknesses, not one had been more alien than cowardice to the man whose recklessness had led him to many an unprecedented venture. And now? No, a thousand times no! Fire and water would unite sooner than Mark Antony and cowardice! He had been under the coercive power of a demon; a mysterious spell had forced him——."

"The mightiest power, love," interrupted Iras with enthusiastic warmth—"a love as great and overmastering as ever subjugated the soul of man."

"Ay, love," repeated Cleopatra, in a hollow tone. Then her lips curled with a faint tinge of derision, and her voice expressed the very bitterness of doubt, as she continued: "Had it been merely the love which makes two mortals one, transfers the heart of one to the other, it might perchance have borne my timorous soul into the hero's breast! But no. Violent tempests had raged before the battle. It had not been possible always to appear before him in the guise in which we would fain be seen by those whom we love.

Even now, when your skilful hands have served me—there is the mirror—the image it reflects—seems to me like a carefully preserved wreck——”

“O my royal mistress,” cried Iras, raising her hands beseechingly, “must I again declare that neither the grey hairs which are again brown, nor the few lines which Olympus will soon render invisible, nor whatever else perhaps disturbs you in the image you behold reflected, impairs your beauty? Unclouded and secure of victory, the spell of your godlike nature——”

“Cease, cease!” interrupted Cleopatra. “I know what I know. No mortal can escape the great eternal laws of Nature. As surely as birth commences life, everything that exists moves onward to destruction and decay.”

“Yet the gods,” Iras persisted, “give to their works different degrees of existence. The water-lily blooms but a single day, yet how full of vigour is the sycamore in the garden of the Paneum, which has flourished a thousand years! Not a petal in the blossoms of your youth has faded, and is it conceivable that there is even the slightest diminution in the love of him who cast away all that man holds dearest because he could not endure to part, even for days or weeks, from the woman whom he worshipped?”

“Would that he had done so!” cried Cleopatra mournfully. “But are you so sure that it was love which made him follow me? I am of a dif-

ferent opinion. True love does not paralyze, but doubles the high qualities of man. I learned this when Cæsar was prisoned by a greatly superior force within this very palace, his ships burned, his supply of water cut off. In him also, in Antony, I was permitted to witness this magnificent spectacle twenty—what do I say?—a hundred times, so long as he loved me with all the ardour of his fiery soul. But what happened at Actium? That shameful flight of the cooing dove after his mate, at which generations yet unborn will point in mockery! He who does not see more deeply will attribute to the foolish madness of love this wretched forgetfulness of duty, honour, fame, the present and the future; but I, Iras—and this is the thought which whitens one hair after another, which will speedily destroy the remnant of your mistress's former beauty by the exhaustion of sleepless nights—I know better. It was not love which drew Antony after me, not love that trampled in the dust the radiant image of reckless courage, not love that constrained the demigod to follow the pitiful track of a fugitive woman."

Here her voice fell, and seizing the girl's wrist with a painful pressure, she drew her closer to her side and whispered:

"The goblet of Nektanebus is connected with it. Ay, tremble! The powers that emanate from the glittering wonder are as terrible as they are unnatural. The magic spell exerted by the beaker

has transformed the heroic son of Herakles, the more than mortal, into the whimpering coward, the crushed, broken nonentity I found upon the galley's deck. You are silent? Your nimble tongue finds no reply. How could you have forgotten that you aided me to win the wager which forced Antony to gaze into the beaker before I filled it for him? How grateful I was to Anubis when he finally consented to trust to my care this marvel of the temple treasures, when the first trial succeeded, and Antony, at my bidding, placed the magnificent wreath which he wore upon the bald brow of that crabbed old follower of Aristoteles, Diomedes, whom he detested in his inmost soul! It was scarcely a year ago, and you know how rarely at first I used the power of the terrible vessel. The man whom I loved obeyed my slightest glance, without its aid. But later—before the battle—I felt how gladly he would have sent me, who might ruin all, back to Egypt. Besides, I felt—I have already said so—that something had come between us. Yet, often as he was on the point of sacrificing me to the importunate Romans, I need only bid him gaze into the beaker, and exclaim: 'You will not send me hence. We belong together. Whither one goes, the other will follow!' and he besought me not to leave him. The very morning before the battle I gave him the drinking cup, urging him, whatever might happen, never, never to leave me. And he obeyed this time also, though

the person to whom a magic spell bound him was a fleeing woman. It is terrible. And yet, have I a right to execrate the thrall of the beaker? Scarcely! For without the Magian's glittering vessel—a secret voice in my soul has whispered the warning a thousand times during the sleepless nights—he would have taken another on the galley. And I believe I know this other—I mean the woman whose singing enthralled my heart too at the Adonis festival just before our departure. I noticed the look with which his eyes sought hers. Now I know that it was not merely my old deceitful foe, jealousy, which warned me against her. Alexas, the most faithful of his friends, also confirmed what I merely feared—ah! and he told me other things which the stars had revealed to him. Besides, he knows the siren, for she was the wife of his own brother. To protect his honour, he cast off the coquettish Circe.”

“Barine!” fell in resolute tones from the lips of Iras.

“So you know her?” asked Cleopatra, eagerly.

The girl raised her clasped hands beseechingly to the Queen, exclaiming :

“I know this woman only too well, and how my heart rages against her! O my mistress, that I, too, should aid in darkening this hour! Yet it must be said. That Antony visited the singer, and even took his son there more than once, is known throughout the city. Yet that is not the

worst. A Barine entering into rivalry with you! It would be too ridiculous. But what bounds can be set to the insatiate greed of these women? No rank, no age is sacred. It was dull in the absence of the court and the army. There were no men who seemed worth the trouble of catching, so she cast her net for boys, and the one most closely snared was the King Cæsarion."

"Cæsarion!" exclaimed Cleopatra, her pale cheeks flushing. "And his tutor Rhodon? My strict commands?"

"Antyllus secretly presented him to her," replied Iras. "But I kept my eyes open. The boy clung to the singer with insensate passion. The only expedient was to remove her from the city. Archibius aided me."

"Then I shall be spared sending her away."

"Nay, that must still be done; for, on the journey to the country Cæsarion, with several comrades, attacked her."

"And the reckless deed was successful?"

"No, my royal mistress. I wish it had been. A love-sick fool who accompanied her drew his sword in her defence, raised his hand against the son of Cæsar, and wounded him. Calm yourself, I beseech you, I conjure you—the wound is slight. The boy's mad passion makes me far more anxious."

The Queen's pouting scarlet lips closed so firmly that her mouth lost the winning charm which

was peculiar to it, and she answered in a firm, resolute tone: "It is the mother's place to protect the son against the temptress. Alexas is right. Her star stands in the path of mine. A woman like this casts a deep shadow on her Queen's course. I will defend myself. It is she who has placed herself between us; she has won Antony. But no! Why should I blind myself? Time and the charms he steals from women are far more powerful than twenty such little temptresses. Then, there are the circumstances which prevented my concealing the defects that wounded the eyes of this most spoiled of all spoiled mortals. All these things aided the singer. I feel it. In her pursuit of men she had at her command all the means which aid us women to conceal what is unlovely and enhance what is beautiful in a lover's eyes, while I was at a disadvantage, lacking your aid and the long-tested skill of Olympus. The divinity on the ship, amid the raging of the storm, was forced more than once to appear before the worshipper ungarlanded, without ornament for the head, or incense."

"But though she used all the combined arts of Aphrodite and Isis, she could not vie with you, my royal mistress!" cried Iras. "How little is required to delude the senses of one scarcely more than a child!"

"Poor boy!" sighed the Queen, gently. "Had he not been wounded, and were it not so hard to

resign what we love, I should rejoice that he, too, understands how to plan and act. Perhaps—Iras, would that it might be so!—now that the gate is burst open, the brain and energy of the great Cæsar will enter his living image. As the Egyptians call Horus ‘the avenger of his father,’ perhaps he may become his mother’s defender and avenger. If Cæsar’s spirit wakes within him, he will wrest from the dissembler Octavianus the heritage of which the nephew robbed the son. You swear that the wound is but a slight one?”

“The physicians have said so.”

“Well, then we will hope so. Let him enter the conflict of life. We will afford him ample opportunity to test his powers. No foolish passion shall prevent the convalescent youth from following his father upward along the pathway of fame. But send for the woman who ensnared him, the audacious charmer whose aspirations mount to those I hold dearest. We will see how she appears beside me!”

“These are grievous times,” said Iras, who saw in amazement the Queen’s eyes sparkle with the confident light of victory. “Grant your foot its right. Let it crush her! Monsters enough, on whom you cannot set your foot, throng your path. Hence to Hades, in these days of conflict, with all who can be quickly removed!”

“Murder?” asked Cleopatra, her noble brow contracting in a frown.

"If it must be, ay," replied Iras, sharply. "If possible, banishment to an island, an oasis. If necessity requires, to the mines with the siren!"

"If necessity requires?" repeated the Queen. "I think that means, if it proves that she has deserved the harshest punishment."

"She has brought it upon herself by every hour of my sovereign's life clouded through her wiles. In the mines the desire to set snares for husbands and sons soon vanishes."

"And people languish in the most terrible torture till death ends their suffering," added Cleopatra, in a tone of grave reproof. "No, girl, this victory is too easy. I will not send even my foe to death without a hearing, especially at this time, which teaches me what it is to await the verdict of one who is more powerful. This woman who, as it were, summons me to battle, shall have her wish. I am curious to see the singer again, and to learn the means by which she has succeeded in chaining to her triumphal car so many captives, from boys up to the most exacting men."

"What do you intend, my royal mistress?" cried Iras in horror.

"I intend," said Cleopatra imperiously, "to see the daughter of Leonax, the granddaughter of Didymus, two men whom I hold in high esteem, ere I decide her destiny. I wish to behold, test, and judge my rival, heart and mind, ere I condemn her. I will engage in the conflict to which she

challenged the loving wife and mother! But—this is my right—I will compel her to show herself to me as Antony so often saw me during the past few weeks, unaided and unimproved by the arts which we both have at command."

Then, without paying any further heed to her attendant, she went to a window, and, after a swift glance at the sky, added quietly: "The first hour after midnight is drawing to a close. The council will begin immediately. The matter to be under discussion is a venture which might save much from the wreck. The council will last two hours, perchance only one. The singer can wait. Where does she live?"

"In the house which belonged to her father, the artist Leonax, in the garden of the Paneum," replied Iras hoarsely. "But, O my Queen, if ever my opinion had the slightest weight with you——"

"I desire no counsel now, but demand the fulfilment of my orders!" cried Cleopatra resolutely. "As soon as those whom I expect are here——"

The Queen was interrupted by a chamberlain, who announced the arrival of the men whom she had summoned, and Cleopatra bade him tell them that she was on her way to the council chamber. Then she turned again to Iras and in rapid words commanded her to go at once in a closed carriage, accompanied by a reliable person, to Barine's house. She must be brought to the palace without the least delay—Iras would understand—even

if it should be necessary to rouse her from her sleep. "I wish to see her as if a storm had forced her suddenly upon the deck of a ship," she said in conclusion.

Then snatching a small tablet from the dressing-table, she scrawled upon the wax with a rapid hand: "Cleopatra, the Queen, desires to see Barine, the daughter of Leonax, without delay. She must obey any command of Iras, Cleopatra's messenger, and her companion."

Then, closing the diptychon, she handed it to her attendant, asking:

"Whom will you take?"

She answered without hesitation, "Alexas."

"Very well," answered Cleopatra. "Do not allow her a moment for preparations, whatever they may be. But do not forget—I command you—that she is a woman."

With these words she turned to follow the chamberlain, but Iras hurried after her to adjust the diadem upon her head and arrange some of the folds of her robe.

Cleopatra submitted, saying kindly, "Something else, I see, is weighing on your heart."

"O my mistress!" cried the girl. "After these tempests of the soul, these harassing months, you are turning night into day and assuming fresh labours and anxieties. If the leech Olympus——"

"It must be," interrupted Cleopatra kindly. "The last two weeks seemed like a single long

and gloomy night, during which I sometimes left my couch for a few hours. One who seeks to drag what is dearest from the river does not consider whether the cold bath is agreeable. If we succumb, it does not matter whether we are well or ill; if, on the contrary, we succeed in gathering another army and saving Egypt, let it cost health and life. The minutes I intend to grant to the woman will be thrown into the bargain. Whatever may come, I shall be ready to meet my fate. I am at one of life's great turning points. At such a time we fulfil our obligations and demands, both great and small."

A few minutes later Cleopatra entered the throne-room and saluted the men whom she had roused from their slumber in order to lay before them a bold plan which, in the lowest depths of misfortune, her yearning to offer fresh resistance to the victorious foe had caused her vigorous, restless mind to evoke.

When, many years before, the boy with whom, according to her father's will, she shared the throne, and his guardian Pothinus, had compelled her to fly from Alexandria, she had found in the eastern frontier of the Delta, on the isthmus which united Egypt to Asia, the remains of the canal which the energetic Pharaohs of former times had constructed to connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea.

Even at that period she had deemed this ruinous

work worthy of notice, had questioned the *Ænites* who dwelt there about the remains, and even visited some of them herself during the leisure hours of waiting.

From this survey it had seemed possible, by a great expenditure of labour, to again render navigable the canal which the Pharaohs had used to reach both seas in the same galleys, and by which, less than five hundred years before, Darius, the founder of the Persian Empire, had brought his fleet to his support.

With the tireless desire for knowledge characteristic of her, Cleopatra had sought information concerning all these matters, and in quiet hours had more than once pondered over plans for again uniting the Grecian and Arabian seas.

Clearly, plainly, fully, with more thorough knowledge of many details than even the superintendent of the water works, she explained her design to the assembled professionals. If it proved practicable, the rescued ships of the fleet, with others lying in the roadstead of Alexandria, could be conveyed across the isthmus into the Red Sea, and thus saved to Egypt and withdrawn from the foe. Supported by this force, many things might be attempted, resistance might be considerably prolonged, and the time thus gained used in gathering fresh aid and allies.

If the opportunity to make an attack arrived, a powerful fleet would be at her disposal, for which

smaller ships also should now be built at Klysmæ, on the basis of the experience gained at Actium.

The men who had been robbed of their night's rest listened in amazement to the melodious words of this woman who, in the deepest disaster, had devised a plan of escape so daring in its grandeur, and understood how to explain it better than any one of their number could have done. They followed every sentence with the keenest attention, and Cleopatra's language grew more impassioned, gained greater power and depth, the more plainly she perceived the unfeigned, enthusiastic admiration paid her by her listeners.

Even the oldest and most experienced men did not consider the surprising proposal utterly impossible and impracticable. Some, among them Gorgias, who during the restoration of the Serapeum had helped his father on the eastern frontier of the Delta, and thus became familiar with the neighbourhood of Heroonopolis, feared the difficulties which an elevation of the earth in the centre of the isthmus would place in the way of the enterprise. Yet, why should an undertaking which was successful in the days of Sesostris appear unattainable?

The shortness of the time at their disposal was a still greater source of anxiety, and to this was added the information that one hundred and twenty thousand workmen had perished during the restoration of the canal which Pharaoh Necho

nearly completed. The water way was not finished at that period, because an oracle had asserted that it would benefit only the foreigners, the Phœnicians.

All these points were duly considered, but could not shake the opinion that, under specially favourable conditions, the Queen's plan would be practicable; though, to execute it, obstacles mountain-high were to be conquered. All the labourers in the fields, who had not been pressed into the army, must be summoned to the work.

Not an hour's delay was permitted. Where there was no water to bear the ships, an attempt must be made to convey them across the land. There was no lack of means. The mechanics who had understood how to move the obelisks and colossi from the cataract to Alexandria, could here again find opportunity to test their brains and former skill.

Never had Cleopatra's kindling spirit roused more eager, nay, more passionate sympathy, in any counsellors gathered around her than during this nocturnal meeting, and when at last she paused, the loud acclamations of excited men greeted her. The Queen's return, and the tidings of the lost battle which she had communicated, were to be kept secret.

Gorgias had been appointed one of the directors of the enterprise, and the intellect, voice, and winning charm of Cleopatra had so enraptured him

that he already fancied he saw the commencement of a new love which would be fatal to his regard for Helena.

It was foolish to raise his wishes so high, but he told himself that he had never beheld a woman more to be desired. Yet he cherished a very warm memory of the philosopher's granddaughter, and lamented that he would scarcely find it possible to bid her farewell.

Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, Dion's uncle, had questioned him about his nephew in a very mysterious manner as soon as he entered the council chamber, and received the reply that the wound in the shoulder, which Cæsarion had dealt with a short Roman sword, though severe, was—so the physicians assured them—not fatal.

This seemed to satisfy Zeno, and ere Gorgias could urge him to extend a protecting hand over his nephew, he excused himself and, with a message to the wounded man, turned his back upon him.

The courtier had not yet learned what view the Queen would take of this unfortunate affair, and besides, he was overloaded with business. The new enterprise required the issue of a large number of documents conferring authority, which all passed through his hands.

Cleopatra addressed a few kind, encouraging words to each one of the experts who had been entrusted with the execution of her plan. Gorgias,

too, was permitted to kiss her robe, which stirred his blood afresh. He would fain have flung himself at the feet of this marvellous woman and, with his services, place his life at her disposal. And Cleopatra noticed the enthusiastic ardour of his glance.

He, too, had been mentioned in the list of Barine's admirers. There must be something unusual about this woman! But could she have fired a body of grave men in behalf of a great, almost impossible deed, roused them to such enthusiastic admiration as she, the vanquished, menaced Queen? Certainly not.

She felt in the right mood to confront Barine as judge and rival.

In the midst of the deepest misery she had spent one happy hour. She had again felt, with joyous pride, that her intellect, fresh and unclouded, would be capable of outstripping the best powers, and in truth she needed no magic goblet to win hearts.

CHAPTER XII.

BARINE had been an hour in the palace. The magnificently furnished room to which she was conducted was directly above the council chamber, and sometimes, in the silence of the night, the voice of the Queen or the loud cheers of men were distinctly heard.

Barine listened without making the slightest effort to catch the meaning of the words which reached her ears. She longed only for something to divert her thoughts from the deep and bitter emotion which filled her soul. Ay, she was roused to fury, and yet she felt how completely this passionate resentment contradicted her whole nature.

True, the shameless conduct of Philostratus during their married life had often stirred the inmost depths of her placid, kindly spirit, and afterwards his brother Alexas had come to drive her, by his disgraceful proposals, to the verge of despair; rage was added to the passionate agitation of her soul, and for this she had cause to rejoice—but for this mighty resentment during the time of

struggle she might have, perhaps, succumbed from sheer weariness and the yearning desire to rest.

At last, at last, she and her friends, by means of great sacrifices, had succeeded in releasing her from these tortures. Philostratus's consent to liberate her was purchased. Alexas's persecution had ceased long before ; he had first been sent away as envoy by his patron Antony, and afterwards been compelled to accompany him to the war.

How she had enjoyed the peaceful days in her mother's house ! How quickly the bright cheerfulness which she had supposed lost had returned to her soul !—and to-day Fate had blessed her with the greatest happiness life had ever offered. True, she had had only a few brief hours in which to enjoy it, for the attack of the unbridled boys and the wound inflicted upon her lover had cast a heavy shadow on her bliss.

Her mother had again proved to be in the right when she so confidently predicted a second misfortune which would follow the first only too soon.

Barine had been torn at midnight from her peaceful home and her wounded lover's bedside. This was done by the Queen's command, and, full of angry excitement, she said to herself that the men were right who cursed tyranny because it transformed free human beings into characterless chattels.

There could be nothing good awaiting her ; that was proved by the messengers whom Cleopatra

had sent to summon her at this unprecedented hour. They were her worst enemies: Iras, who desired to wed her lover—Dion had told her so after the assault—and Alexas, whose suit she had rejected in a way which a man never forgives.

She had already learned Iras's feelings. The slender figure with the narrow head, long, delicate nose, small chin, and pointed fingers, seemed to her like a long, sharp thorn. This strange comparison had entered her head as Iras stood rigidly erect, reading aloud in a shrill, high voice the Queen's command. Everything about this hard, cold face appeared as sharp as a sting, and ready to destroy her.

Her removal from her mother's house to the royal palace had been swift and simple.

After the attack—of which she saw little, because, overpowered by fear and horror, she closed her eyes—she had driven home with her lover, where the leech had bandaged his injuries, and Berenike had quickly and carefully transformed her own sleeping chamber into a sick-room.

Barine, after changing her dress, did not leave Dion's side. She had attired herself carefully, for she knew his delight in outward adornment. When she returned from her grandparents, before sunset, she was alone with him, and he, kissing her arm, had murmured that wherever the Greek tongue was spoken there was not one more beautiful. The gem was worthy of its loveliness. So she

had opened her baggage to take out the circlet which Antony had given, and it again enclasped her arm when she entered the sick-room.

Because Dion had told her that he deemed her fairest in the simple white robe she had worn a few days before, when there were no guests save himself and Gorgias, and she had sung until after midnight his favourite songs as though all were intended for him alone, her choice had fallen upon this garment. And she rejoiced that she had worn it—the wounded man's eyes rested upon her so joyously when she sat down opposite to him.

The physician had forbidden him to talk, and urged him to sleep if possible. So Barine only held his hand in silence, whispering, whenever he opened his eyes, a tender word of love and encouragement.

She had remained with him for hours, leaving her place at his side merely to give him his medicine, or, with her mother's aid, place poultices on his wounds.

When his manly face was distorted by suffering, she shared his pain; but during most of the time a calm, pleasant sense of happiness pervaded her mind. She felt safe and sheltered in the possession of the man whom she loved, though fully aware of the perils which threatened him, and, perhaps, her also. But the assurance of his love completely filled her heart and cast every care entirely into the shade. Many men had seemed estimable and

agreeable, a few even desirable husbands, but Dion was the first to awaken love in her ardent but by no means passionate soul. She regarded the experiences of the past few days as a beautiful miracle. How she had yearned and pined until the most fervent desire of her heart was fulfilled! Now Dion had offered her his love, and nothing could rob her of it.

Gorgias and the sons of her uncle Arius had disturbed her a short time. After they had gone with a good report, Berenike had entreated her daughter to lie down and let her take her place. But Barine would not leave her lover's couch, and had just loosed her hair to brush it again and fasten the thick, fair braids around her head, when, two hours after midnight, some one knocked loudly on the window shutters. Berenike was in the act of removing the poultice, so Barine herself went into the atrium to wake the doorkeeper.

But the old man was not asleep, and had anticipated her. She recognized, with a low cry of terror, the first person who entered the lighted vestibule—Alexas. Iras followed, her head closely muffled, for the storm was still howling through the streets. Last of all a lantern-bearer crossed the threshold.

The Syrian saluted the startled young beauty with a formal bow, but Iras, without a greeting or even a single word of preparation, delivered the Queen's command, and then read aloud, by the

light of the lantern, what Cleopatra had scrawled upon the wax tablet.

When Barine, pallid and scarcely able to control her emotion, requested the messengers who had arrived at so late an hour to enter, in order to give her time to prepare for the night drive and take leave of her mother, Iras vouchsafed no reply, but, as if she had the right to rule the house, merely ordered the doorkeeper to bring his mistress's cloak without delay.

While the old man, with trembling knees, moved away, Iras asked if the wounded Dion was in the dwelling; and Barine, her self-control restored by the question, answered, with repellent pride, that the Queen's orders did not command her to submit to an examination in her own house.

Iras shrugged her shoulders and said, sneeringly, to Alexas:

"In truth, I asked too much. One who attracts so many men of all ages can scarcely be expected to know the abode of each individual."

"The heart has a faithful memory," replied the Syrian in a tone of correction, but Iras echoed, contemptuously, "The heart!"

Then all were silent until, instead of the doorkeeper, Berenike herself came hurrying in, bringing the cloak. With pallid face and bloodless lips she wrapped it around her daughter's shoulders, whispering, amid floods of tears, almost inaudible words of love and encouragement, which Iras interrupted

by requesting Barine to follow her to the carriage.

The mother and daughter embraced and kissed each other, then the closed equipage bore the persecuted woman through the storm and darkness to Lochias.

Not a word was exchanged between Barine and the Queen's messengers until they reached the room where the former was to await Cleopatra; but here Iras again endeavoured to induce her to speak. At the first question, however, Barine answered that she had no information to give.

The room was as bright as if it were noonday, though the lights flickered constantly, for the wind found its way through the thin shutters closing the windows on both sides of the corner room, and a strong, cold draught swept in. Barine wrapped her cloak more closely around her; the storm which howled about the sea-washed palace harmonized with the vehement agitation of her soul. Whether she had looked within or without, there was nothing which could have soothed her save the assurance of being loved—an assurance that held fear at bay. Now, indignation prevented dread from overpowering her, yet calm consideration could not fail to show her that danger threatened on every hand. The very manner in which Iras and Alexas whispered together, without heeding her presence, boded peril, for courtiers show such contempt only to

those whom they know are threatened with the indifference or resentment of the sovereign.

Barine, during her married life with a man devoid of all delicacy of feeling, and with a disposition as evil as his tongue was ready, had learned to endure many things which were hard to bear; yet when, after a remark from Iras evidently concerning her, she heard Alexas laugh, she was compelled to exert the utmost self-restraint to avoid telling her enemy how utterly she despised the cowardly cruelty of her conduct. But she succeeded in keeping silent. Still, the painful constraint she imposed on herself must find vent in some way, and, as the tortured anguish of her soul reached its height, large tears rolled down her cheeks.

These, too, were noticed by her enemy and made the target of her wit; but this time the sarcasm failed to produce its effect upon the Syrian, for, instead of laughing, he grew grave, and whispered something which seemed to Barine a reproof or a warning. Iras's reply was merely a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders.

Barine had noticed long before that her mother, in her fear and bewilderment, had brought her own cloak instead of her daughter's, and this circumstance also did not seem to her foe too trivial for a sneer.

But the childish insolence that seemed to have taken possession of one who usually by no means lacked dignity, was merely the mask beneath which

she concealed her own suffering. A grave motive was the source of the mirth by which she affected to be moved at the sight of her enemy's cloak. The grey, ill-fitting garment disfigured Barine, and she desired that the Queen should feel confident of surpassing her rival even in outward charms. No one, not even Cleopatra, could dispense with a protecting wrap in this cold draught, and nothing suited her better than the purple mantle in whose delicate woollen fabric black and gold dragons and griffins were embroidered. Iras had taken care that it lay ready. Barine could not fail to appear like a beggar in comparison, though Alexas said that her blue kerchief was marvellously becoming.

He was a base-minded voluptuary, who, aided by rich gifts of mind and wide knowledge, had shunned no means of ingratiating himself with Antony, the most lavish of patrons. The repulse which this man, accustomed to success, had received from Barine had been hard to forget, yet he did not resign the hope of winning her. Never had she seemed more desirable than in her touching weakness. Even base natures are averse to witnessing the torture of the defenceless, and when Iras had aimed another poisoned shaft at her, he ventured, at the risk of vexing his ally, to say, under his breath :

“Condemned criminals are usually granted, before their end, a favourite dish. I have no cause to wish Barine anything good; but I would not

grudge that. You, on the contrary, seem to delight in pouring wormwood on her last mouthful."

"Certainly," she answered, her eyes sparkling brightly. "Malice is the purest of pleasures; at least to me, when exercised on this woman."

The Syrian, with a strange smile, held out his hand, saying:

"Keep your good-will towards me, Iras."

"Because," she retorted with a sneer, "evil may follow my enmity. I think so, too. I am not especially sensitive concerning myself, but whoever dares"—here she raised her voice—"to harm one whom I— Just listen to the cheers! How she carries all hearts with her! Though Fate had made her a beggar, she would still be peerless among women. She is like the sun. The clouds which intrude upon her pathway of radiance are consumed and disappear."

While uttering the last sentence she had turned towards Barine, whose ear the sharp voice again pierced like a thorn, as she commanded her to prepare for the examination.

Almost at the same moment the door, caught by the wind, closed with a loud bang. The "introducer" * had opened it, and, after a hasty glance, exclaimed:

"The audience will not be given in this meeting-place for all the winds of heaven! Her Majesty

* Marshal of the court.

desires to receive her late visitor in the Hall of Shells."

With these words he bowed courteously to Barine, and ushered her and her two companions through several corridors and apartments into a well-heated anteroom.

Here even the windows were thoroughly protected from the storm. Several body-guards and pages belonging to the corps of the "royal boys" stood waiting to receive them.

"This is comfortable," said Alexas, turning to Iras. "Was the winter we have just experienced intended to fill us with twofold gratitude for the delights of the mild spring in this blessed room?"

"Perhaps so," she answered sullenly, and then added in a low tone: "Here at Lochias the seasons do not follow their usual course. They change according to the pleasure of the supreme will. Instead of four, the Egyptians, as you know, have but three; in the palaces on the Nile they are countless. What is the meaning of this sudden entry of summer? Winter would have pleased me better."

The Queen—Iras knew not why—had changed her arrangements for Barine's reception. This vexed her, and her features assumed a gloomy, threatening expression as the young beauty, casting aside her cloak and kerchief, stood awaiting Cleopatra in a white robe of fine material and perfect fit. The thick, fair braids, wound simply

around her shapely head, gave her an appearance of almost childish youth, and the sight made Iras feel as if she, and Cleopatra also, were outwitted.

In the dimly lighted atrium of the house near the Paneum garden, she had noticed only that Barine wore something white. Had it been merely a night robe, so much the better. But she might have appeared in her present garb at the festival of Isis. The most careful deliberation could have selected nothing more suitable or becoming. And did this vain woman go to rest with costly gold ornaments? Else how did the circlet chance to be on her arm? Each of Cleopatra's charms seemed to Iras, who knew them all, like a valuable possession of her own. To see even the least of them surpassed by another vexed her; and to behold in yonder woman a form which she could not deny was no less beautiful, enraged, nay, pierced her to the heart.

Since she had known that because of Barine she could hope for nothing more from the man to whose love she believed she possessed a claim dating from their childhood, she had hated the young beauty. And now to the many things which contributed to increase her hostile mood, was added the disagreeable consciousness that during the last few hours she had treated her contemptibly. Had she only seen earlier what her foe's cloak concealed, she would have found means to give her a different appearance. But she must

remain as she was; for Charmian had already entered. Other hours, however, would follow, and if the next did not decide the fate of the woman whom she hated, future ones should.

For this purpose she did not need the aid of Charmian, her uncle Archibius's sister, who had hitherto been a beloved associate and maternal friend. But what had happened? Iras fancied that her pleasant features wore a repellent expression which she had never seen before. Was this also the singer's fault? And what was the cause?

The older woman's manner decided the question whether she should still bestow upon her returned relative the love of a grateful niece. No, she would no longer put any restraint upon herself. Charmian should feel that she (Iras) considered any favour shown to her foe an insult. To work against her secretly was not in her nature. She had courage to show an enemy her aversion, and she did not fear Charmian enough to pursue a different course. She knew that the artist Leonax, Barine's father, had been Charmian's lover; but this did not justify her favouring the woman who had robbed her niece of the heart of the man whom she—as Charmian knew—had loved from childhood.

Charmian had just had a long conversation with her brother, and had also learned in the palace that Barine had been summoned to the Queen's

presence in the middle of the night; so, firmly persuaded that evil was intended to the young woman who had already passed through so many agitating scenes of joy and sorrow, she entered the waiting-room, and her pleasant though no longer youthful face, framed in smooth, grey hair, was greeted by Barine as the shipwrecked mariner hails the sight of land.

All the emotions which had darkened and embittered her soul were soothed. She hastened towards her friend's sister, as a frightened child seeks its mother, and Charmian perceived what was stirring in her heart.

It would not do, under existing circumstances, to kiss her in the palace, but she drew Leonax's daughter towards her to show Iras that she was ready to extend a protecting hand over the persecuted woman. But Barine gazed at her with pleading glances, beseeching aid, whispering amid her tears: "Help me, Charmian. She has tortured, insulted, humiliated me with looks and words—so cruelly, so spitefully! Help me; I can bear no more."

Charmian shook her kind head and urged her in a whisper to calm herself. She had robbed Iras of her lover; she should remember that. Cost what it might, she must not shed another tear. The Queen was gracious. She, Charmian, would aid her. Everything would depend on showing herself to Cleopatra as she was, not as slander

represented her. She must answer her as she would Archibius or herself.

The kindly woman, as she spoke, stroked her brow and eyes with maternal tenderness, and Barine felt as if goodness itself had quelled the tempest in her soul. She gazed around her as though roused from a troubled dream, and now for the first time perceived the richly adorned room in which she stood, the admiring glances of the boys in the Macedonian corps of pages, and the bright fire blazing cheerily on the hearth. The howling of the storm increased the pleasant sense of being under a firm roof, and Iras, who had whispered to the "introducer" at the door, no longer seemed like a sharp thorn or a spiteful demon, but a woman by no means destitute of charm, who repulsed her, but on whom she had inflicted the keenest pang a woman's heart can suffer. Then she again thought of her wounded lover at home, and remembered that, whatever might happen, his heart did not belong to Iras, but to her alone. Lastly, she recalled Archibius's description of Cleopatra's childhood, and this remembrance was followed by the conviction that the omnipotent sovereign would be neither cruel nor unjust, and that it would depend upon herself to win her favour. Charmian, too, was the Queen's confidante; and if the manner of Iras and Alexas had alarmed her, Charmian's might well inspire confidence.

All these thoughts darted through her brain

with the speed of lightning. Only a brief time for consideration remained; for, even as she bowed her head on the bosom of her friend, the "introducer" entered the room, crying, "Her illustrious Majesty will expect those whom she summoned in a few minutes!"

Soon after a chamberlain appeared, waving a fan of ostrich feathers and, preceded by the court official, they passed through several brilliantly lighted, richly furnished rooms.

Barine again breathed freely and moved with head erect; and when the wide, lofty folding doors of ebony, against whose deep black surface the inlaid figures of Tritons, mermaids, shells, fish, and sea monsters were sharply relieved, she beheld a glittering, magnificent scene, for the hall which Cleopatra had chosen for her reception was completely covered with various marine forms, from the shells to coral and starfish.

A wide, lofty structure, composed of masses of stalactites and unhewn blocks of stone, formed a deep grotto at the end of the hall, whence peered the gigantic head of a monster whose open jaws formed the fireplace of the chimney. Logs of fragrant Arabian wood were blazing brightly on the hearth, and the dragon's ruby glass eyes diffused a red light through the apartment which, blended with the rays of the white and pink lamps in the shape of lotus flowers fastened among gold and silver tendrils and groups of sedges on the walls

and ceiling, filling the spacious apartment with the soft light whose roseate hue was specially becoming to Cleopatra's waxen complexion.

Several stewards and cup-bearers, the master of the hunt, chamberlains, female attendants, eunuchs, and other court officials were awaiting the Queen, and pages who belonged to the Macedonian cadet corps of royal boys stood sleepily, with drooping heads, around the small throne of gold, coral, and amber which, placed opposite to the chimney, awaited the sovereign.

Barine had already seen this magnificent hall, and others still more beautiful in the Sebasteum, and the splendour therefore neither excited nor abashed her; only she would fain have avoided the numerous train of courtiers. Could it be Cleopatra's intention to question her before the eyes of all these men, women, and boys?

She no longer felt afraid, but her heart still throbbed quickly. It had beat in the same way in her girlhood, when she was asked to sing in the presence of strangers.

At last she heard doors open, and an invisible hand parted the heavy curtains at her right. She expected to see the Regent, the Keeper of the Seal, and the whole brilliantly adorned train of attendants who always surrounded the Queen on formal occasions, enter the magnificent hall. Else why had it been selected as the scene of this nocturnal trial?

But what was this ?

While she was still recalling the display at the Adonis festival, the curtains began to close again. The courtiers around the throne straightened their bowed figures, the pages forgot their fatigue, and all joined in the Greek salutation of welcome, and the "Life! happiness! health!" with which the Egyptians greeted their sovereign.

The woman of middle height who now appeared before the curtain, and who, as she crossed the wide hall alone and unattended, seemed to Barine even smaller than when surrounded by the gay throng at the Adonis festival, must be the Queen.

Ay, it was she!

Irás was already standing by her side, and Charmian was approaching with the "introducer." The women rendered her various little services: thus Irás took from her shoulders the purple mantle, with its embroidery of black and gold dragons. What an exquisite masterpiece of the loom it must be!

All the dangers against which she must defend herself flashed swiftly through Barine's mind; yet, for an instant, she felt the foolish feminine desire to see and handle the costly mantle.

But Irás had already laid it on the arm of one of the waiting maids, and Cleopatra now glanced around her, and with a youthful, elastic step approached the throne.

Once more the feeling of timidity which she

had had in her girlhood overpowered Barine, but with it came the memory of the garden of Epicurus, and Archibius's assurance that she, too, would have left the Queen with her heart overflowing with warm enthusiasm had not a disturbing influence interposed between them.

Yet, had this disturbing influence really existed?

No. It was created solely by Cleopatra's jealous imagination. If she would only permit her to speak freely now, she should hear that Antony cared as little for her as she, Barine, for the boy Cæsarion. What prevented her from confessing that her heart was another's? Iras had no one to blame save herself if she spoke the truth pitilessly in her presence.

Cleopatra now turned to the "introducer," waving her hand towards the throne and those who surrounded it.

Ay, she was indeed beautiful. How bright and clear was the light of her large eyes, in spite of the harassing days through which she had passed and the present night of watching!

Cleopatra's heart was still elated by the reception of her bold idea of escape, and she approached Barine with gentler feelings and intentions. She had chosen a pleasanter room for the interview than the one Iras had selected. She desired a special environment to suit each mood, and as soon as she saw the group of courtiers who surrounded the throne she ordered their dismissal.

The "introducer," to carry out the usual ceremonial, had commanded their presence in the audience chamber, but their attendance had given the meeting a form which was now distasteful to the Queen. She wished to question, not to condemn.

At so happy an hour it was a necessity of her nature to be gracious. Perhaps she had been unduly anxious concerning this singer. It even seemed probable; for a man who loved her like Antony could scarcely yearn for the favour of another woman. This view had been freshly confirmed by a brief conversation with the chief Inspector of Sacrifices, an estimable old man, who, after hearing how Antony had hurried in pursuit of her at Actium, raised his eyes and hands as if transported with rapture, exclaiming: "Unhappy Queen! Yet happiest of women! No one was ever so ardently beloved; and when the tale is told of the noble Trojan who endured such sore sufferings for a woman's sake, future generations will laud the woman whose resistless spell constrained the greatest man of his day, the hero of heroes, to cast aside victory, fame, and the hope of the world's sovereignty, as mere worthless rubbish."

Posterity, whose verdict she dreaded—this wise old reader of the future was right—must extol her as the most fervently beloved, the most desirable of women.

And Mark Antony? Even had the magic power of Nektanebus's goblet forced him to follow her and to leave the battle, there still remained his will, a copy of which—received from Rome—Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, had showed to her at the close of the council. "Wherever he might die," so ran the words, "he desired to be buried by the side of Cleopatra." Octavianus had wrested it from the Vestal Virgins, to whose care it had been entrusted, in order to fill the hearts of Roman citizens and matrons with indignation against his foe. The plot had succeeded, but the document had reminded Cleopatra that her heart had given this man the first of its flowers, that love for him had been the sunshine of her life. So, with head erect, she had crossed the threshold where she was to meet the woman who had ventured to sow tares in her garden. She intended to devote only a short time to the interview, which she anticipated with the satisfaction of the strong who are confident of victory.

As she approached the throne, her train left the hall; the only persons who remained were Charmian, Iras, Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, and the "introducer."

Cleopatra cast a rapid glance at the throne, to which an obsequious gesture of the courtier's hand invited her; but she remained standing, gazing keenly at Barine.

Was it the coloured rays from the ruby eyes of the dragon in the fireplace which shed the

roseate glow on Cleopatra's cheeks? It certainly enhanced the beauty of a face now only too frequently pallid and colourless, when rouge did not lend its aid; but Barine understood Archibius's ardent admiration for this rare woman, when Cleopatra, with a faint smile, requested her to approach.

Nothing more winning could be imagined than the frank kindness, wholly untinged by condescending pride, of this powerful sovereign.

The less Barine had expected such a reception the more deeply it moved her; nay, her eyes grew dim with grateful emotion, which lent them so beautiful a lustre, she looked so lovely in her glad surprise, that Cleopatra thought the months which had elapsed since her first meeting with the singer had enhanced her charms. And how young she was! The Queen swiftly computed the years which Barine must have lived as the wife of Philostratus, and afterwards as the attractive mistress of a hospitable house, and found it difficult to reconcile the appearance of this blooming young creature with the result of the calculation.

She was surprised, too, to note the aristocratic bearing whose possession no one could deny the artist's daughter. This was apparent even in her dress, yet Iras had roused her in the middle of the night, and certainly had given her no time for personal adornment.

She had expected lack of refinement and boldness, in the woman who was said to have attracted so many men, but even the most bitter prejudice could have detected no trace of it. On the contrary, the embarrassment which she could not yet wholly subdue lent her an air of girlish timidity. All in all, Barine was a charming creature, who bewitched men by her vivacity, her grace, and her exquisite voice, not by coquetry and pertness. That she possessed unusual mental endowments Cleopatra did not believe. Barine had only one advantage over her—youth.

Time had not yet robbed the former of a single charm, while from the Queen he had wrested many; their number was known only to herself and her confidantes, but at this hour she did not miss them.

Barine, with a low, modest bow, advanced towards the Queen, who commenced the conversation by graciously apologizing for the late hour at which she had summoned her. "But," she added, "you belong to the ranks of the nightingales, who during the night most readily and exquisitely reveal to us what stirs their hearts——"

Barine gazed silently at the floor a moment, and when she raised her eyes her voice was faint and timid. "I sing, it is true, your Majesty, but I have nothing else in common with the birds. The wings which, when a child, bore me wherever I desired, have lost their strength. They do not

wholly refuse their service, but they now require favourable hours to move."

"I should not have expected that in the time of your youth, your most beautiful possession," replied the Queen. "Yet it is well. I too—how long ago it seems!—was a child, and my imagination outstripped even the flight of the eagle. It could dare the risk unpunished. Now—— Whoever has reached mature life is wise to let these wings remain idle. The mortal who ventures to use them may easily approach too near the sun, and, like Icarus, the wax will melt from his pinions. Let me tell you this: To the child the gift of imagination is nourishing bread. In later years we need it only as salt, as spice, as stimulating wine. Doubtless it points out many paths, and shows us their end; but, of a hundred rambles to which it summons him, scarcely one pleases the mature man. No troublesome parasite is more persistently and sharply rebuffed. Who can blame the ill-treated friend if it is less ready to serve us as the years go on? The wise man will keep his ears ever open, but rarely lend it his active hand. To banish it from life is to deprive the plant of blossoms, the rose of its fragrance, the sky of its stars."

"I have often said the same things to myself, though in a less clear and beautiful form, when life has been darkened," replied Barine, with a faint blush; for she felt that these words were

doubtless intended to warn her against cherishing too aspiring wishes. "But, your Majesty, here also the gods place you, the great Queen, far above us. We should often find existence bare indeed but for the fancy which endows us with imaginary possessions. You have the power to secure a thousand things which to us common mortals only the gift of imagination pictures as attainable."

"You believe that happiness is like wealth, and that the happiest person is the one who receives the largest number of the gifts of fortune," answered the Queen. "The contrary, I think, can be easily proved. The maxim that the more we have the less we need desire, is also false, though in this world there are only a certain number of desirable things. He who already possesses one of ten solidi which are to be divided, ought really to desire only nine, and therefore would be poorer by a wish than another who has none. True, it cannot be denied that the gods have burdened or endowed me with a greater number of perishable gifts than you and many others. You seem to set a high value upon them. Doubtless there may be one or another which you could appropriate only by the aid of the imagination. May I ask which seems to you the most desirable?"

"Spare me the choice, I beseech you," replied Barine in an embarrassed tone. "I need nothing from your treasures, and, as for the other posses-

sions—— I lack many things; but it is uncertain how the noblest and highest gifts in the possession of the marvellously endowed favourite of the gods would suit the small, commonplace ones I call mine, and I know not——”

“A sensible doubt!” interrupted the Queen. “The lame man, who desired a horse, obtained one, and on his first ride broke his neck. The only blessing—the highest of all—which surely bestows happiness can neither be given away nor transferred from one to another. He who has gained it may be robbed of it the next moment.”

The last sentence had fallen from the Queen’s lips slowly and thoughtfully, but Barine, remembering Archibius’s tale, said modestly, “You are thinking of the chief good mentioned by Epicurus—perfect peace of mind.”

Cleopatra’s eyes sparkled with a brighter light as she asked eagerly, “Do you, the granddaughter of a philosopher, know the system of the master?”

“Very superficially, your Majesty. My intellect is far inferior to yours. It is difficult for me thoroughly to comprehend all the details of any system of philosophy.”

“Yet you have attempted it?”

“Others endeavoured to introduce me into the doctrines of the Stoics. I have forgotten most of what I learned; only one thing lingered in my memory, and I know why—because it pleased me.”

“And *that*?”

"Was the wise law of living according to the dictates of our own natures. The command to shun everything contradictory to the simple fundamental traits of our own characters pleased me, and wherever I saw affectation, artificiality, and mannerism I was repelled, while from my grandfather's teaching I drew the principle that I could do nothing better than to remain, so far as life would permit, what I had been as a child ere I had heard the first word of philosophy, or felt the constraint which society and its forms impose."

"So the system of the Stoics leads to this end also!" cried the Queen gaily, and, turning to the companion of her own studies, she added: "Did you hear, Charmian? If we had only succeeded in perceiving the wisdom and calm, purposeful order of existence which the Stoics, amid so much that is perverse, unhealthy, and provocative of contradiction, nevertheless set above everything else! How can I, in order to live wisely, imitate Nature, when in her being and action I encounter so much that is contradictory to my human reason, which is a part of the divine?"

Here she hesitated, and the expression of her face suddenly changed.

She had advanced close to Barine and, while standing directly in front of her, her eyes had rested on the gem which adorned her arm above the elbow.

Was it this which agitated Cleopatra so violently

that her voice lost its bewitching melody, as she went on in a harsh, angry tone?—"So that is the source of all this misfortune. Even as a child I detested that sort of arbitrary judgment which passes under the mask of stern morality. There is an example! Do you hear the howling of the storm? In human nature, as well as in the material world, there are tempests and volcanoes which bring destruction, and, if the original character of any individual is full of such devastating forces, like the neighbourhood of Vesuvius or Etna, the goal to which his impulses would lead him is clearly visible. Ay, the Stoic is not allowed to destroy the harmony and order of things in existence, any more than to disturb those which are established by the state. But to follow our natural impulses wherever they lead us is so perilous a venture, that whoever has the power to fix a limit to it betimes is in duty bound to do so. This power is mine, and I will use it!"

Then, with iron severity, she asked: "As it seems to be one of the demands of your nature, woman, to allure and kindle the hearts of all who bear the name of man, even though they have not yet donned the garb of the Ephebi, so, too, you seem to appear to delight in idle ornaments. Or"—and as she spoke she touched Barine's shoulder—"or why should you wear, during the hours of slumber, that circlet on your arm?"

Barine had watched with increasing anxiety the

marked change in the manner and language of the Queen. She now beheld a repetition of what she had experienced at the Adonis festival, but this time she knew what had roused Cleopatra's jealousy. She, Barine, wore on her arm a gift from Antony. With pallid face she strove to find a fitting answer, but ere she could do so Iras advanced to the side of the incensed Queen, saying: "That circlet is the counterpart of the one your august husband bestowed upon you. The singer's must also be a gift from Mark Antony. Like every one else in the world, she deems the noble Imperator the greatest man of his day. Who can blame her for prizing it so highly that she does not remove it even while she sleeps?"

Again Barine felt as if a thorn had pierced her; but though the resentment which she had previously experienced once more surged hotly within her heart, she forced herself to maintain seemingly external composure, and struggled for some word in answer; but she found none suitable, and remained silent.

She had told the truth. From early youth she had followed the impulses of her own nature without heeding the opinion of mortals, as the teachings of the Stoics directed, and she had been allowed to do so because this nature was pure, truthful, alive to the beautiful, and, moreover, free from those unbridled, volcanic impulses to which the Queen alluded. The cheerful patience of her soul

had found ample satisfaction in the cultivation of her art, and in social intercourse with men who permitted her to share their own intellectual life. To-day she had learned that the first great passion of her heart had met with a response. Now she was bound to her lover, and knew herself to be pure and guiltless, far better entitled to demand respect from sterner judges of morality than the woman who condemned her, or the spiteful Iras, who had not ceased to offer her love to Dion.

The sorrowful feeling of being misunderstood and unjustly condemned, mingled with fear of the terrible fate to which she might be sentenced by the omnipotent sovereign, whose clear intellect was clouded by jealousy and the resentment of a mother's wounded heart, paralyzed her tongue. Besides, she was confused by the angry emotion which the sight of Iras awakened. Twice, thrice she strove to utter a few words of explanation, defence, but her voice refused to obey her will.

When Charmian at last approached to encourage her, it was too late; the indignant Queen had turned away, exclaiming to Iras: "Let her be taken back to Lochias. Her guilt is proved; but it does not become the injured person, the accuser, to award the punishment. This must be left to the judges before whom we will bring her."

Then Barine once more recovered the power of speech. How dared Cleopatra assert that she was convicted of a crime, without hearing her defence?

As surely as she felt her own innocence she must succeed in proving it, and with this consciousness she cried out to the Queen in a tone of touching entreaty: "O your Majesty, do not leave me without hearing me! As truly as I believe in your justice, I can ask you to listen to me once more. Do not give me up to the woman who hates me because the man whom she——"

Here Cleopatra interrupted her. Royal dignity forbade her to hear one woman's jealous accusation of another, but, with the subtle discernment with which women penetrate one another's moods, she heard in Barine's piteous appeal a sincere conviction that she was too severely condemned. Doubtless she also had reason to believe in Iras's hate, and Cleopatra knew how mercilessly she pursued those who had incurred her displeasure. She had rejected and still shuddered at her advice to remove the singer from her path; for an inner voice warned her not to burden her soul now with a fresh crime, which would disturb its peace. Besides, she had at first been much attracted by this charming, winning creature; but the irritating thought that Antony had bestowed the same gift upon the sovereign and the artist's daughter still so incensed her, that it taxed to the utmost her graciousness and self-control as, without addressing any special person, she exclaimed, glancing back into the hall: "This examination will be followed by another. When the time comes, the accused must appear before the

judges; therefore she must remain at Lochias and in custody. It is my will that no harm befalls her.—You are her friend, Charmian. I will place her in your charge. Only”—here she raised her voice—“on pain of my anger, do not allow her by any possibility to leave the palace, even for a moment, or to hold intercourse with any person save yourself.”

With these words she passed out of the hall and went into her own apartments. She had turned the night into day, not only to despatch speedily matters which seemed to her to permit of no delay, but even more because, since the battle of Actium, she dreaded the restless hours upon her lonely couch. They seemed endless; and though before she had remembered with pleasure the unprecedented display and magnificence with which she had surrounded her love-life with Antony, she now in these hours reproached herself for having foolishly squandered the wealth of her people. The present appeared unbearable, and from the future a host of black cares pressed upon her.

The following days were overcrowded with business details.

Half of her nights were spent in the observatory. She had not asked again for Barine. On the fifth night she permitted Alexas to conduct her once more to the little observatory which had been erected for her father at Lochias, and Antony's favourite knew how to prove that a star which had

long threatened her planet was that of the woman whom she seemed to have forgotten as completely as she had ignored his former warning against this very foe.

The Queen denied this, but Alexas eagerly continued: "The night after your return home your kindness was again displayed in its inexhaustible and—to us less noble souls—incomprehensible wealth. Deeply agitated, we watched during the memorable examination the touching spectacle of the greatest heart making itself the standard by which to measure what is petty and ignoble. But ere the second trial takes place the wanderers above, who know the future, bid me warn you once more; for that woman's every look was calculated, every word had its fixed purpose, every tone of her voice was intended to produce a certain effect. Whatever she said or may yet say had no other design than to deceive my royal mistress. As yet there have been no definite questions and answers. But you will have her examined, and then—— What may she not make of the story of Mark Antony, Barine, and the two armlets? Perhaps it will be a masterpiece."

"Do you know its real history?" asked Cleopatra, clasping her fingers more closely around the pencil in her hand.

"If I did," replied Alexas, smiling significantly, "the receiver of stolen goods should not betray the thief."

"Not even if the person who has been robbed—the Queen—commands you to give up the dishonestly acquired possession?"

"Unfortunately, even then I should be forced to withhold obedience; for consider, my royal mistress, there are but two great luminaries around which my dark life revolves. Shall I betray the moon, when I am sure of gaining nothing thereby save to dim the warm light of the sun?"

"That means that your revelations would wound me, the sun?"

"Unless your lofty soul is too great to be reached by shadows which surround less noble women with an atmosphere of indescribable torture."

"Do you intend to render your words more attractive by the veil with which you shroud them? It is transparent, and dims the vision very little. My soul, you think, should be free from jealousy and the other weaknesses of my sex. There you are mistaken. I am a woman, and wish to remain one. As Terence's Chremes says he is a human being, and nothing human is unknown to him, I do not hesitate to confess all feminine frailties. Anubis told me of a queen in ancient times who would not permit the inscriptions to record 'she,' but 'he came,' or 'he, the ruler, conquered.' Fool! Whatever concerns me, my womanhood is not less lofty than the crown. I was a woman ere I became Queen. The people prostrate themselves before my

empty litters; but when, in my youth, I wandered in disguise with Antony through the city streets and visited some scene of merrymaking, while the men gazed admiringly at me, and we heard voices behind us murmur, 'A handsome couple!' I returned home full of joy and pride. But there was something greater still for the woman to learn, when the heart in the breast of the Queen forgot throne and sceptre and, in the hours consecrated to Eros, tasted joys known to womanhood alone. How can you men, who only command and desire, understand the happiness of sacrifice? I am a woman; my birth does not exalt me above any feeling of my sex; and what I now ask is not as Queen but as woman."

"If that is the case," Alexas answered with his hand upon his heart, "you impose silence upon me; for were I to confess to the woman Cleopatra what agitates my soul, I should be guilty of a double crime—I would violate a promise and betray the friend who confided his noble wife to my protection."

"Now the darkness is becoming too dense for me," replied Cleopatra, raising her head with repellent pride. "Or, if I choose to raise the veil, I must point out to you the barriers——"

"Which surround the Queen," replied the Syrian with an obsequious bow. "There you behold the fact. It is an impossibility to separate the woman from the princess. So far as I am concerned, I do

not wish to anger the former against the presumptuous adorer, and I desire to yield to the latter the obedience which is her due. Therefore I entreat you to forget the armlet and its many painful associations, and pass to the consideration of other matters. Perhaps the fair Barine will voluntarily confess everything, and even add how she managed to ensnare the amiable son of the greatest of men, and the most admirable of mothers, the young King Cæsarion."

Cleopatra's eyes flashed more brightly, and she angrily exclaimed: "I found the boy just now as though he were possessed by demons. He was ready to tear the bandage from his wound, if he were refused the woman whom he loved. A magic potion was the first thought, and his tutor of course attributes everything to magic arts. Charmian, on the contrary, declares that his visits annoyed and even alarmed Barine. Nothing except a rigid investigation can throw light upon this subject. We will await the Emperor's return. Do you think that he will again seek the singer? You are his most trusted confidant. If you desire his best good, and care for my favour, drop your hesitation and answer this question."

The Syrian assumed the manner of a man who had reached a decision, and answered firmly: "Certainly he will, unless you prevent him. The simplest way would be——"

"Well?"

"To inform him, as soon as he lands, that she is no longer to be found. I should be especially happy to receive this commission from my royal sun."

"And do you think it would dim the light of your moon a little, were he to seek her here in vain?"

"As surely as that the contrary would be the case if he were always as gratefully aware of the peerless brilliancy of his sun as it deserves. Helios suffers no other orb to appear so long as he adorns the heavens. His lustre quenches all the rest. Let my sun so decree, and Barine's little star will vanish."

"Enough! I know your aim now. But a human life is no small thing, and this woman, too, is the child of a mother. We must consider, earnestly consider, whether our purpose cannot be gained without proceeding to extremes. This must be done with zeal and a kindly intention—— But I—— Now, when the fate of this country, my own, and the children's is hanging in the balance, when I have not fifteen minutes at my command, and there is no end of writing and consulting, I can waste no time on such matters."

"The reflective mind must be permitted to use its mighty wings unimpeded," cried the Syrian eagerly. "Leave the settlement of minor matters to trustworthy friends."

Here they were interrupted by the "introducer," who announced the eunuch Mardion. He

had come on business which, spite of the late hour, permitted no delay.

Alexas accompanied the Queen to the tablinum, where they found the eunuch. A slave attended him, carrying a pouch filled with letters which had just been brought by two messengers from Syria. Among them were some which must be answered without delay. The Keeper of the Seal and the Exegetus were also waiting. Their late visit was due to the necessity of holding a conference in relation to the measures to be adopted to calm the excited citizens. All the galleys which had escaped from the battle had entered the harbour the day before, wreathed with garlands as if a great victory had been won. Loud acclamations greeted them, yet tidings of the defeat at Actium spread with the swiftness of the wind. Crowds were now gathering, threatening demonstrations had been made in front of the Sebasteum, and on the square of the Serapeum the troops had been compelled to interfere, and blood had flowed.

There lay the letters. Zeno remarked that more papers conferring authority were required for the work on the canal, and the Exegetus earnestly besought definite instruction.

"It is much—much," murmured Cleopatra. Then, drawing herself up to her full height, she exclaimed, "Well, then, to work!"

But Alexas did not permit her to do this at once. Humbly advancing as she took her seat at the large

writing-table, he whispered: "And with all this, must my royal mistress devote time and thought to the destroyer of her peace. To disturb your Majesty with this trifle is a crime; yet it must be committed, for should the affair remain unheeded longer, the trickling rivulet may become a mountain torrent——"

Here Cleopatra, whose glance had just rested upon a fateful letter from King Herod, turned her face half towards her husband's favourite, exclaiming curtly, with glowing cheeks, "Presently."

Then she glanced rapidly over the letter, pushed it excitedly aside, and dismissed the waiting Syrian with the impatient words: "Attend to the trial and the rest. No injustice, but no untimely mildness. I will look into this unpleasant matter myself before the Emperor returns."

"And the authority?" asked the Syrian, with another low bow.

"You have it. If you need a written one, apply to Zeno. We will discuss the affair further at some less busy hour."

The Syrian retired; but Cleopatra turned to the eunuch and, flushed with emotion, cried, pointing to the King of Judea's letter: "Did you ever witness baser ingratitude? The rats think the ship is sinking, and it is time to leave it. If we succeed in keeping above water, they will return in swarms; and this must, must, *must* be done, for the sake of this beloved country and her independence. Then

the children, the children! All our powers must now be taxed, every expedient must be remembered and used. We will hammer each feeble hope until it becomes the strong steel of certainty. We will transform night into day. The canal will save the fleet. Mark Antony will find in Africa Pinarius Scarpus with untouched loyal legions. The gladiators are faithful to us. We can easily make them ours, and my brain is seething with other plans. But first we will attend to the Alexandrians. No violence!"

This exclamation was followed by order after order, and the promise that, if necessary, she would show herself to the people.

The Exegetus was filled with admiration as he received the clear, sagacious directions. After he had retired with his companions, the Queen again turned to the Regent, saying: "We did wisely to make the people happy at first with tidings of victory. The unexpected news of terrible disaster might have led them to some unprecedented deed of madness. Disappointment is a more common pain, for which less powerful remedies will suffice. Besides, many things could be arranged ere they knew that I was here. How much we have accomplished already, Mardion! But I have not even granted myself the joy of seeing my children. I was forced to defer the pleasure of the companionship of my oldest friends, even Archibius. When he comes again he will be admitted. I have given

the order. He knows Rome thoroughly. I must hear his opinion of pending negotiations."

She shivered as she spoke, and pressing her hand upon her brow, exclaimed: "Octavianus victor, Cleopatra vanquished! I, who was everything to Cæsar, beseeching mercy from his heir. I, a petitioner to Octavia's brother! Yet, no, no! There are still a hundred chances of avoiding the horrible doom. But whoever wishes to compel the field to bear fruits must dig sturdily, draw the buckets from the well, plough, and sow the seed. To work, then, to work! When Antony returns he must find all things ready. The first success will restore his lost energy. I glanced through yonder letter while talking with the Exegetus; now I will dictate the answer."

So she sat reading, writing, and dictating, listening, answering, and giving orders, until the east brightened with the approach of dawn, the morning star grew pale, and the Regent, utterly exhausted, entreated her to consider her own health and his years, and permit him a few hours' rest.

Then she, too, allowed herself to be led into her darkened chamber, and this time a friendly, dreamless slumber closed her weary eyes and held her captive until roused by the loud shouts of the multitude, who had heard of the Queen's return and flocked to Lochias.

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